

Vindiciae Pietatis;
OR, A
VINDICATION
OF
Godliness,

In the greatest Strictness and
Spirituality of it,

From the Imputations of
FOLLY and FANCY.

Together with
Several Directions for the Attain-
ing and Maintaining of a
Godly Life.

By *R. A.*

London, Printed in the Year, 1663.

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To my dearly Beloved in
Christ, the Inhabitants of the
Parish of *B.* in the Coun-
ty of *S.*

My dearly beloved Brethren,

The ensuing Sermons, as they had their Birth for your sakes, so are they now offered into your hands; and they come unto you, upon the same important errand, upon which their Author hath been sent among you, *viz.* to shew you the Path of life, and to bring you into, and establish you in, that holy state and way that leads to everlasting Blessednesse.

The chief hindrances of Sinners eternal Happiness (next to that innate enmity against God and Godlinesse, which is rooted in their hearts) are, their prejudices against, and their ignorance of the good wayes of the Lord.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Sathan and his Instruments have made it their businesse, by those vollies of reproaches and unreasonable calumnies, which they are continually discharging against holinesse, to render it in the judgement of the world, an empty and contemptible thing.

Two things there are, amongst many others, which they lay to the reproach of it. The one that it is folly; whatever there may be in this Godlinesse, yet it is attended with so many difficulties, dangers, and hazards, and will be such an unsufferable prejudice to all that will have much to do with it, that it is a foolish thing, upon such hazards and disadvantages to adventure upon it. If this will not do, but the consciences of men, whilst they apprehend the real worth and excellency of it, stand convinced, that it is not folly but wisdome, to adventure on any difficulties, to run any hazards, for so glorious a prize: then comes in the second reproach, That it is but a device, a specious contrivance, to take up eager heads, to amuse and divert the busie, and keep in awe weak souls, when if it be enquired into, notwithstanding its glorious pretences, it will be found nothing else but imagination, meer fancy,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

fancy, and no reality at all in the heart of it.

These impressions I have endeavoured, according to my might, to wipe away from your hearts; and the hearts of such as read, what you have heard, in the ensuing discourses; where, I hope, you will see, both sufficient reason, whence to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, to establish your hearts in the firm belief, and resolved embracing of it; and abundant encouragement, to hold on your holy course to the end.

The other hindrance of a Godly Life, is mens ignorance; They walk not in the way of the Lord, because they know not the way of the Lord; some rude and dark notions of Religion possibly they may have, but wherein the Spirit and Life of Godliness stands, and how to set upon an holy and heavenly course they cannot tell. This hindrance I have in part prevented in that description I have given of a godly man, and more fully removed in those Directions which I have subjoined, for the obtaining and carrying on a godly Life.

Bréthren, my hearts desire and Prayer for you is, that what I have done may be

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successful to your souls; *that you may be saved*, as the Apostle speaks; that you may be brought into, and established in, the way of truth, and may be found walking in the way of Righteousness. And if the Lord shall be pleased so to follow these my endeavours with his Blessing, that they may contribute any thing to this end; If the Lord shall so animate these (otherwise) dead words, by his quickening Spirit, that any souls of them that are without may be added to the Church, that any cubits may be added to the stature of those that are within, it shall be a Crown to me, and exceeding Cause of rejoicing. Let the Lord Almighty have the praise for ever, as from all such who shall reap any benefit hereby; So from the soul of

Your Servant in
the Gospel,

R. A.

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Ephes.

Ephes. 5. 15.

*See then that ye walk circumspectly
not as fools, but as wise.*

LN the first *Verse* of this Chapter, the Apostle exhorts to the whole duty of Christians, *Be ye followers of God*: The same Exhortation he gives in other terms, *vers. 8. Walk as Children of Light*: both which Exhortations are comprehensive of the whole duty of Christians.

In the following Verses, he gives particular Rules and Directions, respecting the particular duties of Religion; As, 1. Walk in Love *vers. 2.* 2. Flee all iniquity; both, 1. Greater Iniquities, Fornication and all uncleanness, or Covetousness. 2. Smaller Iniquities; 1. The evils of the tongue; neither filthiness, that is, filthy talking, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient. Not only evil works, but evil words, not only an unclean conversation, but corrupt communication, is uncomely in the Saints. 3. Partaking in other mens sins, *vers. 11.* which he further dehorts from *vers. 11.* charging them, 1. To have no communion with them. Have

no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: 2. To be guilty of no connivance at them, but rather reprove them.

Of these strict Rules in the Text, he professes the strict observation; See that ye walk circum-spectly, with an eye to every duty, to every direction; not only the greater and more weighty duties of Religion, but the lesser and smaller parts of it, even to all that the Lord requires.

In the words you may observe,

1. A strict charge; See, or look diligently and carefully to it.

2. The matter given in charge, *walk* ~~circumspectly~~, which some render *walk* *modestly*; others, *accurately*, *exactly*; others, *walk* *precisely*, and thus a learned Critick affirms, the word *επιβολης* most properly signifies, *precisely*.

3. A commendation of this circumspect walking; *This is wise walking; not as fools, but as wise*: Intimating, that to walk loosely, is to walk foolishly, to walk circumspectly, is to walk wisely, as men of wisdom.

The Observations from these words, are chiefly these two:

Do & t. 1. Christians must be Precisions.

2. Precisions are no fools, or, Christians of an exact and circumspect life, are, whatever the world accounts of them, truly wise men: This latter Observation is it that I intend to insist upon.

Beloved, I am entering upon a Discourse of a sort of people, of whom we may say, with those Jews, *Act 28. 22. Concerning this Sect, we know that it is every where spoken against*; And, who with

with the Apostles, 1 Cor. 4, 9. Are made a spectacle to the World, and to Angels, and to Men; concerning whom Heaven and Earth are divided, and the World is divided within it self: Of whom God sayes, *The World is not worthy*; Of whom the World say, *They are not worthy to live*; Of whom God sayes, *They are the Apple of mine eye*; Of whom the World sayes, *They are a sore in our eye*; whom God accounts his *Jewels*, whom men account the *filth of the world*, and the *off-scouring* of all things: Of whom God sayes, *They are the Sons of Wisdom*, but men say, *They are Fools*. And, as God and Men are thus divided, so are men no lesse divided amongst themselves. Some few say concerning these, as they concerning Christ, *They are good men*; Others say, *No, but they are deceivers of the people*. A *Precision*, with the most, is grown into a *Proverb* of *Reproach*, a *mark of Infamy*. To be a *Drunkard*, a *Fornicator*, a *Swearer*, is no *reproach*, in comparison of being noted for a *Puritan*.

Well, but let us enquire a little more narrowly into the way and manner of this sort of people, about whom the world is thus moved, and hath been in all Ages.

In order hereunto I shall shew you,

First, what a *Precision* is; and, Secondly, prove to you, against all the world, that he is no *Fool*, but a truly, yea, the only wise man: which if I do not, through the help of God, make evident to the Consciences of impartial and unprejudiced persons, let me pass for a *deceiver*:

Touching the former, What a Precisian is, a Scripture Precisian. Let me first tell you, to prevent mistakes, who he is not.

1. Not a *Pharisee*, a painted Sepulchre, whose Religion is a meer shew; who hath the Form of Godliness without the Power; who is pure in his own eyes, and yet not cleansed from his filthinesse; who is exact about the *minimia Legis*, the lower and more circumstantial matters, and neglects the weightier things of the Law. This is not he.

2. Not a *Phanatick*, properly so called, (though that be a vizard put upon him by some, as the Hides of Beasts were put upon the Christians of old); not a *Phanatick*, I say, whose Religion is all Fancy, Imagination, Enthusiasms, the Dreams and Visions of his own Heart. Neither is this he. Christianity is not a Castle in the air, but is a building that hath Foundation.

3. Not a *Phrenetick*, no son of Violence or Contention, who not knowing what Spirit he is of, calls for fire from Heaven to set all in combustion, if every thing be not exactly fashioned according to his own mind. Neither is this he. *The Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable. The servants of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle, &c.*

By a Precisian, I mean a sincere circumspect Christian, one whose care and endeavour is, *To walk uprightly, according to the Truth of the Gospel*, who withdrawing himself from the Fellowship, Fashions and Lusts of the World, and denying

ing himself the sinful Liberties thereof, doth exercise himself to keep a good conscience towards God and men. This is the Person against whom the great hate and envy, the severe censures and calumnies of ungodly men, are chiefly intended, under what colour, or disguise, soever they are carried; the enmity is not betwixt Sinners and Hypocrites, but betwixt Sinners and Saints, the seed of the Serpent, and the seed of the Woman, not the pretended, but the true seed; *Israelites* indeed, are the men whom the *Ishmaelites* persecute, Gal. 4.29. *He that was born after the Flesh, persecuted him not that pretended to be, but was born after the Spirit.* Of this Person, or of this sort of people, I shall give you a more full discription in these two Particulars.

1. By their Make, or Constitution.
2. By their Way, or Conversation.

I. By their Constitution, they are made and cut out exactly according to the pattern, they are born of the Spirit, born of God, and they bare the expresse Image of their Father upon them: Col. 3. 10: *Renewed after the Image of Him that created him;* they are of a new Make, from what they were, there is a mighty change wrought in and upon them, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *permutatus, We are changed into the same Image.* In our first birth, we were brought forth in the Image of our first Father, Genesis 5. 3. *Adam begat a Son in his own Image,* that is, a fleshy and earthly Image. The first Man was of the Earth, earthly, and such are all his natural Progeny, an earthly Seed, an earthly Generation;

tion ; he that is born of the Spirit, is brought forth in a spiritual frame, John 3.6. *That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit* : he that is born from above is of an heavenly *Nature*, as well as *Origins*! The change that Religion makes on men, is not such a low and inconsiderable thing as some men make it, standing only in some little Reformation of the Life, but it consists chiefly in the renewing of the Soul after the Image of God, the forming of Christ upon the heart or Inner Man. As that second change, which shall be at the Resurrection, will be the transforming of our *vile bodies*, into the likenesse of Christ's glorious Body ; so this first change is a transforming of our *vile souls* into the likenesse of his glorious Spirit. Christians are the Temples of the Lord, and as Moses made the Tabernacle exactly according to the pattern shewed him in the Mount, so these spiritual Temples are made as exactly according to their pattern, 2 Cor. 3.3. They are the Epistles of Christ, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in Tables of stone, but in fleshly Tables of the heart. Carnal men plead hard for their Christianity, they are all Christians, all Disciples, all the people of God, though they be Ignorant, Unbelieving, Earthly, Sensual, yet some kind of Profession (such as it is) there is amongst them, a profession of Faith, a profession of Repentance, which, though it amount to little more then bare (*saying*) I believe, I repent, I am sorry for my sins, yet this must passe for Christianity. But (as Christ once said to the tempting Jews) whose

is this Image and Superscription? Where is the Divine Stamp and Impress? Where is your likeness to Christ? Is there not still the Visage of the Old man? Is there not the old Pride, the old Envy, the old Enmity against Holiness, the old Guile, and Falshood, and Lust still spread over you? Is this the Image of Christ? Christians that are truly such, are precisely formed according to this pattern; they have Face for Face, Limb for Limb; Grace for Grace; all the Grace that is in Christ, is truly, though yet not perfectly copied out upon them, though the Characters may be something blotted and obscured, by reason of the remainders of corruption, yet there they are; the same mind, the same heart that was in Christ, is in them. A true Christian is a Transcript of Christ. *As he is, so are we in the World.*

This inward change, this forming of Christ upon the heart, is the very Soul and Life of Christianity; you may as well call him a *Man*, whose Soul is not in him, as you may call him a *Christian*, who hath not the Spirit of Christ in him. Let no man count himself a Christian from any outward privileges, much less from any outward *Paint* of Christianity, but from the *Inward Prints* of it upon his heart. Thou hopest thou art a Christian, but where is the Image and Superscription of Christ upon thy heart? Dost thou not find, not onely a unlikeness to Christ, but a dislike of Christ, an inward loathing of the holiness of Christ, and a rising of heart against the strictness of that holy life which He requires? Dost thou not find a favour of earthiness

Illness and fleshliness bearing the sway and rule in thine heart ? Dost thou not find principles, tending altogether to looseness and licentiousness ? Is this thy likeness to Christ ? Dost thou not find an emptiness of the Light, Life, Love, Grace of Christ in thy Soul ? Whatever thou hast of Christ without, thou hast nothing of Christ within. Deceive not thy self, God is a Spirit, and his eye is first upon the spirits and souls of men; he loves truth in the inward parts, he loves holiness in the inward parts ; *He is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and he is a Christian, which is one inwardly* : He is not a Christian, who is onely outwardly so. Nay further, as he is not a Christian, which is not inwardly so, so neither he that hath something of the inwards of a Christian, and hath not radically all the Graces of Christ in him ; He that hath Faith, and hath not Charity, he that hath the light of a Christian, and not the love, he that hath the desires of a Christian, and not the conscience of a Christian, he that wants any one of the vital parts of Christianity, hath nothing at all ; a thorough Christian, is throughout conform to the pattern. And thus you have a description of Scripture Precisions, by their *Make or Constitution*.

II. I shall describe them by their Conversation.

1. By the end of their Conversation, and that 2. By their Course or Motion to this end.

1. By the end of their Conversation ; What is it that these men would have, or whither are they bound ? They cannot be content to go along

along with their Neighbors, to liye and do as others: Whither is it that they are going, or what is it that they would have? Why this is it, they are travelling Heaven-ward, trading to another Countrey, they are bound for the holy Land, for the holy City, they are going towards *Sion* or *Jerusalem*, which is above. *Jerem. 50. 5.* *They shall ask the way to Sion with their faces thitherward.* *Sion* was the Ancient seat of Gods residence among his People, the place of Gods solemn Service, wherein he was wont to meet his People, and to appear unto them. This *Sion* which was here below, the place of Gods *gracious presence*, was a Type of that *Sion* which is above, Heaven, the place of Gods *glorious presence*; this sort of people are travelling Heaven-ward, they are those *Strangers* and *Prilgrims* here on earth, mentioned, *H.b. 11. 13, 14.* *That are seeking a Country*, not an earthly, but an heavenly Countrey, as it is there exprest. There are two things in the fore-mentioned Text, that discover whither they are travelling, 1. The inquiry they make, you may guess whither a Traveller is going, when you hear him asking diligently the way to such or such a place. *They shall ask the way to Sion.* 2. Their setting their faces thitherward, *They shall ask, &c. with their faces thither-ward.* Their setting their faces towards *Sion*, notes two things, 1. Their looking wishly towards it, a Travellers eye is much towards his journeys end; Christians that are making Heaven-ward are much and often looking Heaven-ward; a Christians heart is in his eye, and his eye is on his home. 2. Their setting their faces

ees thither-ward, notes the bending of their course thither-ward. 'Twas said of Christ, Luke 9. 51. *He set his face to go to Jerusalem.* Christians set their faces Heaven-ward, and thither they bend their course. They are much in asking the way, *What must I do to be saved? who shall ascend into the holy Hill? what manner of persons must we be, that we may get thither? and they take the way that leads thither.*

And this is a further Description of this sort of people, they are men for another Country, men for another World; they are born from Above, and they seek things Above; they are risen with Christ, and they are ascending unto Christ; their treasure is Above, their hopes are Above, and thither are they hastening; whatsoever they have of this worlds goods for the support of their life, yet these things are not the scope and end of their life: They seek that Glory, Honour and Immortality which comes from God, and they are going on from strength to strength, till they come and appear before God in *Si^m*. And herein lies a special difference betwixt them and all others whatsoever: Worldly men are men of this world, for a worldly happiness, for a worldly heaven, an heaven on earth; or if they have any thoughts or hopes of another Heaven, yet they think not so much of it as to ask the way thither. How seldom do we hear any such question put by them, *What must I do to be saved? What must I do to be Rich? Which is the way to Honour and temporal Preferment? or how may I escape trouble and save my self harmless?* These inquiries, and such like, are ordinarily

ordinarily in their hearts and mouths ; but such a terrible question as this, *What must I do to be saved?* comes so seldom from any of them, that 'tis a wonder how the Devil with all his skil can make them once believe or hope that ever they shall attain to that salvation ; or if they do ask the way to Heaven, yet it is not with their faces but with their backs thither-ward ; whatever little talk there may fall in sometimes about Souls and eternal salvation, yet their faces are set another way, they bend their course to *Egypt* and *Sodome*, towards their wealth or their wickedness. Hearken O ye foolish worldlings, you say every one of you, you hope for salvation, but which way are your faces set, whither are you going ? Is that way of Swearing, Lying, and Lust, and carnal Liberty, and Covetousness, and Sensuality, to which you give up your selves, is this the way of Life ? In this a sincere Christian is differenced from all others in the world, he fixes his heart, and his hope, and aims upon an eternal happiness, and he bends his course towards the obtaining of it.

2. By their course or motion towards this end. And here I shall give you a threefold description of them :

1. They are such as walk in the right way.
2. They are upright and exact in the Way.
3. From this way they will not be turned aside by any flatteries of the world on one hand, or frowns on the other.

I. They are such as walk in the right Way, which is called sometimes *the way of the Lord*, sometimes *the way of Truth*, sometimes *the way* of

of Righteousness, sometimes *the way of Life*, *Psal. 1. 1, 2. Psal. 1 19. 1.* They understand which is the right way by these three pair of Way-marks,

1. The Old and Good way.
2. The New and Living way.
3. The Strait and Narrow way.

First, The Old and Good way, that is the right Way, that is the way they are commanded to enquire after and take, *Jer. 6. 16. Stand ye in the ways and see; ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein; stand ye in the ways and see.* There are many ways in the world, some that are apparently the way of Death, and not a few that pretend to be the way of Life. If you would know which of all these ways is the right, ask for the old Path, the Good way: *The old path*, that which was from the beginning. Godliness is no Innovation, it is as old as the world, *1 John 1. 1. That which was from the beginning declare we unto you.* Then it is the good as well as *the old way*. Antiquity alone is not enough to prove that we are in the right; there is an *evil way*, that is an *old way*, the way of sin is very ancient. The Right way is the Old and Good way; there is a threefold good, Profitable, Pleasant, and Honest. Though the Right way have both profit and pleasure in it, yet the proper Character of it is, *the honest way*, the way of Righteousness, Mercy, Holiness, &c. *Mic. 6. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* This is good, the good way. *Phil. 4. 8, 9. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things*

things are just, whatsoever things are pure, &c. these things do, and the God of Peace shall be with you.

Secondly, The New and Living way. Three things it may be you will ask me about this.

1. What is this New and Living way?

I answer, Christ is this way. John 14.6. *I am the way.* Heb. 10.19. Having therefore boldnesse to enter into the holiest; ver. 20. By a new and living way whitch be hath consecrated for us, &c. A Christian that walks Heaven-ward walks in Christ, Col. 2.6. He walks in Union with Christ, in the Name, and Strength, and Spirit of Christ; he that is not in Christ is out of his way, whatever good there seems to be in the way he is going, yet it is not saving good.

2. Whether there be two right wayes?

I answer, No but one; it is true, there is mention made also of the way of Gods Commandments, but these make not two distinct wayes, but are one and the same way; *faith in Christ, and obedience to the Law of God* are the one way of Life: He that walks with God walks in Christ, it is through Christ, and our Union with him, that we are strengthned and enabled to do the will of God; it is through Christ that what we do is accepted of God; there is no act of obedience, be it never so excellent for the matter of it, that is a step to the Kingdom of God, that hath not something of Christ in it, that is not done through his Spirit, and sprinkled with his Blood: and so on the other side, whatever faith, and hope, and confidence we have in Christ, if it be not such a faith, such an hope as brings forth obedience

diance to the will of God, it cannot save us ; this way of faith and obedience, this is the right way, and the one and only way of Life. In all that general Assembly and Church of the first-born, that are already in Heaven, there is not one Soul but entered by this one way. *Abel, and Enoch, and Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Peter, and Paul*, with the whole generation of Saints now in glory, they all went the same way, they walked with God, and lived and dyed in Faith, and now inherit the Promises : And all the residue of Saints that are yet in their Pilgrimage ; yea, whoever shall be in the Ages to come, must by this one way enter into the Kingdom of God. This is the good and old way which was from the beginniug, this is the new and living way which shall be to the end, *Tit. 2. 8. These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works ; these things are good and profitable for men.* If this be so, if this be the one and only way of Life, then in what case are the sinful unbelieving world ? Whither are ye going, O ye sons of folly ? You tell us you hope to be saved, what in your unbelief and folly ? Search and see if in the whole book of God you find any other way of Salvation, but Faith in Christ, and Obedience to the Gospel.

3. How can one and the same way be old, and yet new ? I answer, 'Tis old, and yet not antiquated; 'tis new, and yet no Innovation; 'tis old, because it was from the beginning ; 'tis new, because now in the latter end of the world, it hath been newly cast up, made more plain, easie and open.

Thirdly

Thirdly, The strait and narrow Way, *Math. 7. 14.* *Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life.* Christians must go by a line, there is no elbow-room for Lust to expatiate, every step on this hand, or on that, is a deviation; it is a Way that is hedged in; the Commandment is the hedge, which limits us within a very narrow path: Christians must live by *Rule*, they must not eat nor drink but by *Rule*, they must not buy nor sell but by *Rule*, they must not work nor sit still, they must not speak nor keep silence but by *Rule*, *Gal. 6. 16.* *As many as walk according to this Rule, peace be upon them.* 'Tis also a narrow Way; the word might have well been translated, *a troublesome, or painful way*; the Verb from which the word comes, signifies to *opprese*: there are many pressures and afflictions to be met with all in this Way, The *Crosse* is a Christians Way-mark; *Through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God*: The Way of sin is a Plain, there is neither hedge nor ditch to limit them, there is neither bush nor brake to discourage them.

Now this is the Way which circumspect Christians take; this *Good and Old Way*, this *New and Living Way*, this *Straight and Narrow Way*, this is the Right Way; And this is also the most *Excellent Way*. For,

1. It is the Way of Truth, *Psal. 119. 30.* *I have chosen the Way of Truth: John 14. 6. I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life:* It is the Way which the Truth or Word of God doth prescribe to us, it is the *true Way*, that is indeed in all the parts of it that which it declares

it self to be: The Way of sinners is a Lye, a Way made up of Lyes; The evil Works of sinners are Lyes; *Prov. 11. 18.* The Wicked work, a deceitful work; the work of a Lye; the words signifie, their words are lying words, their very duties are a Lye. *Hos. 11. 12.* *Epbraim compassest me about with lies;* that is, with lying Duties, lying Prayers, lying Sacrifices. lying Praises; their Prayers are no Prayers; their Sacrifices are no Sacrifices, they do but dissemble with God, and deceive themselves in all their Performances, their Hopes are a lye, their Comforts are a lye, their Refuges are a lye; the Way of sinners is wholly made up of lyes: But the Way of Christians is the true Way, their Duties, their Comforts, their Joyes, their Hopes have truth and reality in them. *Psal. 25. 10.* *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that keep his Covenant.* Now look what excellency there is of Truth above a Lye, so great is the Excellency of this Way of Christians above all other ways.

2. It is the way of Righteousnesse and Holinessse; Holinessse hath a glory in it, every thing by how much the more pure it is, by so much the more precious in its kind. What other Excellency have the Angels of Light above the Devils, but their holinessse? What was it that transformed the Angels that fell into Devils, but the losse of their holinessse? Wherein stands the Reasonable Creatures likenesse to the God of Glory, but in their holinessse? This is the divine Nature they are made partakers of the Spirit of God, and of Glory, resting upon them, *1 Pet. 4. 14.*

Holi-

Holiness hath such a feli-evidencing Excellency, that the Consciences of carnal men do often, whether they will or no, give their Testimony, to it, Who is there almost, whose lust hath transformed into so very a Brute; but many times, even when his tongue is reproaching it, his Conscience gives his Tongue the lye? Who is there, whose Lust hath so totally put out his light, that doth not, in his serious Judgement, conclude, That a gracious, humble, meek merciful, sober, heavenly life, is really more excellent (though not so suitable to his brutish appetite) than lewdness and sensuality? There is such a beauty and Majesty in Holiness that doth command an acknowledgment of it, from all sorts of knowing men.

3. It is the Way of God; not only the way wherein the Lord hath commanded them to walk, but wherein the Lord appears to them, wherein they have the Vision and Fruition of God; and therefore a godly life is often expressed by *walking with God by living in fellowship or communion*, or acquaintance with God, Psal. 16. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me*, Psal. 17. 15. *I will bebold thy face in Righteousness*. *Enoch walked with God, Noah walked with God*; Good company will make any way pleasant, how craggy or dirty soever our Way be under foot, it's pleasant to see the Sunshine over us, Psal. 50. 23. *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God*; The Lord meets his People in his Ways, and causes all his Goodness to pass on before them, proclaiming his Name, *The Lord gracious and merciful*,

flow to anger, and of great kindeſſe. This Vision of God makes all the labours and difficulties of this way sweet and easie to them; certainly this is a bleſſed way, for God is in it. Where is bleſſedneſſe to be had, but in God? how is bleſſedneſſe to be had in God, but in beholding and enjoying of him? Wherein stands the bleſſedneſſe of Heaven, but in the Vision and Fruition of God? Christians, let all the ungodly world ſay what they can, to disgrace and disparage the way of Righteouſneſſe, as a wretched, diſconſolate, and contemptible way, yet till they can conuict your ſenſes, and make you not to believe what you taſt and ſee, be not diſcouraged, neither let them delude you into any better opinion of their wayes of ſin, from any Pleaſure, Credit, Eafe, or Gain, that is in them; what ever there is in them, God is not in them: God is in the way of Righteouſneſſe, and there alone to be found and enjoyed, and therefore this is the moſt bleſſed and ex- cellent way.

4. It is the way of the Kingdome; the proper Excellency of the means stands in this, That it will certainly bring about its end, that's our best way that will bring us ſafely home. This way is called the way of Life, Psalm 16. ver. 11. *Thou wilt ſhew me the path of Life.* 2 Pet. 1. 5, 11. *Adde to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, patience, godlineſſe, &c.* For ſo an entrance ſhall be miniftred unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdome. If there were no other Excellency of this way, yet this is enough to commend it and exalt it above all other wayes, that it's the way to Heaven. If the

the way of Holinesse and Righteousnesse were in all other respects as despicable and uncomfortable a way as the World imagine it; if Godinesse were in it self as great a burthen and bondage, as carnal men account it; if all the reproaches, and flanders, and calumnies, and lying reports, that ungodly men cast upon the way of the Lord were true, yet this, that it's the way to everlasting blessednesse, would answer all that is spoken against it. If you were to go to *London* upon a businesse wherein your life and all that ever you had were concerned, you would not stand reasoning thus, Is not the way to *York* a better and more pleasant way? What ever the way to *London* be, how long, or how dirty, or how dangerous, or how hard to find soever it be, yet your Life and Estate depending on your going thither, leaving all other wayes and disputes about them, you would take the way that leads thither. The way of the Lord, what ever you have to say against it, to discourage or make you unwilling to travel it, yet 'tis the the only way you have to save your souls, the only way to Eternal blessednesse; when you have made all your objections, and all your excuses, you must take up this holy course of life, or you can never come into the Kingdome of God. The way of carnal Jolity and Merriment is as you think, a more pleasant and delightful way: But is this your way to Heaven? The way of Covetousnesse and Worldlinessse, you count a more gainful and profitable way; but is this the way of Life? the way of Slothfulnessse and Idlenesse, is you think an easie way,

but is this the way of the Kingdome? The strict and severe way of Holiness, hath little carnal delight, ease, and worldly profit in it; but is not this the way to everlasting Life? Heb. 12.14. *Follow peace with all men and Holiness, without which no man shall see God.*

Now if all this be so, (search sinners, search and consider if it be not so, consult the Scriptures, consult your Reasons and Consciences, and see if you find them not all bearing witness to this Truth) and if these things be so, as hath been said, then come all ye foolish and vain-hearted persons, and judge of the unreasonableness of these scoffing demands of the looser sort of the people of God, who in scorn and derision, will be often asking of them, why must you be so nice? why so precise? why so strict, and making so much a-do about every small matter? why cannot you be content to do as others, and take the same liberty as others? Why, 'tis all one as if they should demand of them, Why will you keep your way, the way of Life? Why will you be saved? Why can't you be content to be damned as well as others: Is there not a great deal of wisdom and reason in such questionings and scoffing demands? If you stood by a dangerous miry Bogue, through which there was one narrow tract of firm ground and should see a company of poor creatures even sunk, and almost swallowed up, and choak'd in the mud and mire, on the one hand, and the other, and yet should you see them Laughing, and Mocking, and Jeering at those who kept on the narrow

row Tract of firm ground, that would bring them safely over; Would you not say, they were all mad, or bewitched? This is the case of foolish Worldlings, they are sunk in the Mud, they are even swallowed up and choak'd with their lusts, and ready to perish, and yet they fall a laughing and deriding of them, who will keep the true way; Sinners, what do you mean? you are sinking, you are sinking; a few steps further, and you will be swallowed up, why will you not come back, and get into this safe way? Leave your scoffing at the Saints, and learn of them, leave your judging, and censuring, & follow them in the holy steps that they are going in, before you.

II. They are upright and exact in the way, they walk on in the straight way, with a straight foot, Psal. 119. 1. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way* or the perfect, or entire in the way, Psal. 32. 1. *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not.* It's said of Caleb, Numb. 14. 24. *That he followed the Lord fully.* Luke 1. 6. 2 Cor 1. 12. *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our Conscience, that in all simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world,* 1 Thes. 2. 10. *Ye are witnesses; and God also, how Holily, and Justly, and Blamelessly, we behaved our selves among you.* Observe it, they liv'd a Holy, Harmless, Blameless life, and that Holiness which appeared upon them, was not a cheat, or juggle, to deceive the World, but was really what it appeared to be; and for this they appealed to a threefold witness, 1. A witness in their breasts, the Testimony of their own

Consciences; This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our Consciences. 2. A witness in the world; Ye are witnesses, your eyes have seen what our life hath been, be but true witnesses, and then be you witness; speak but what you have seen, and speak the worst (among you that believe) the world will be ready to say, you are too crafty to let us know what you do in secret, when you are amongst your selves; I, but sayes he, let them that believe speak, those that have been with us, publickly and privately, what our conversation hath been; if it be said, they are of your own party, and will not speak all they know, then he appeals to a third witness. 3. A witness in Heaven (and God also) he that seeth all things, before whom are all our wayes, he that seeth all things, seeth our integrity and blamelessness.

But here, that I be not mistaken, I must distinguish betwixt their aims, or what they are pressing and reaching towards, and their attainments, or what they have reached to. The aims of these circumspect Christians in their whole course, are at perfection, *Phil. 3. 14.* I press towards the mark; they would keep their way without the least wandering, they would not tread one step awry, they would not speak one word amiss, they would not think one thought amiss, they would not neglect any office duty, nor commit any one sin, but would be what the Apostle would have them to be, *Holy and blameless, the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked generation:* These are their Aims, and as to their Attainments, though they fall

short

short of their desires, they cannot do as they would, *The good that I would I do not*, yet they do their best, they follow the Lord with the best of their understanding, serve the Lord with the best of their strength, and when they have done their best, mourn and grieve that 'tis no better.

That I may more distinctly open this exact and upright walking in the way of the Lord, which their hearts are set upon, I shall consider it,

1. As it hath respect to the Commandment.

2. As it hath respect to Conscience.

1. Their exact walking, as it hath respect to the Commandment, stands, 1. in having respect to every Commandment, to the whole Word of God, Psal. 119. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments*, Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*. The life of a Christian is a busie life, the Word of God finds us much work to do, we have work for every faculty and member; our understandings have their work, our wills, affections, consciences, tongues, ears, eyes, hand, have all their particular works assigned them; every grace hath its work, faith hath its work, love hath its work, patience hath its work; every lust makes us work, to restrain, deny, watch, crucifie them; these are weights and clogs that will hang on, and will hinder us from all other works, if we let them alone; these are working against us continually, and apt to set us on work against our selves; a working mischief and ruine to our

soules, if they be not continually looked to, and kept under. We have work against us for every condition; out prosperity finds us much work, to keep our selves humble, heavenly, watchful, in an holy fear and jealousy, least the contentments and pleasures of this life, make an invasion and intrude upon our hearts, and spoil us of our graces and comforts. Our afflictions find us work, to keep our spirits from sinking and fainting, from murmuring and envying at those whose way doth prosper. We have all the set and solemn Duties of Religion to attend upon; we have praying work, and hearing work, and sacrament work, and reading work, and heart-searching work, and meditating work: We have work to be done for others, our neighbours and aquaintance, our friends and our enemies, our families, servants, our children, we have not only work to do for them as men, but work to do for God with them, God hath work for us to do among our neighbours, God hath work for us to do in our families, and for our friends and enemies, instructing work, reproving work, praying work, works of mercy and charity, &c, we have a continual succession of work, every day hath its busyness, Christians must have no sleeping dayes, their very Sab-baths must be working dayes; we must be at work for our soules, even on those dayes wherein we must do no bodily work. There remains a rest for the People of God, such a rest, wherein they shall work no more, nor be weary any more, wherein all their work shall be *to eat of the fruit of their doings*; but on his side that rest, there is no rest, but we must be full of labour.

You

You see the Word hath provided much work for Christians; now those that are circumspect and upright and in the way will be thorough pac'd and stick at nothing the Word requires, they are for any service, ready to every good work, they will not pick and choose, they will not hale or baulk with God, but as the Apostle, *Col. 4. 10.* Endeavour to stand compleat in all the wills of God. Those duties that have most pain in them, those duties that have most hazard attending them, those duties that have the greatest contrariety to their natural temper and dispositions, if they be duties, if the Word sayes, *This must be done,* this is that which the Lord requires, an upright heart will yield and stoop to them. Brethren, if there be any one thing required in the whole Book of God that you cannot consent to, but allow your selves in the ordinary neglect of, concerning which you say with *Naaman.* *The Lord spare me in this one thing,* whatsoever else you do you can have no comfort that your hearts are upright.

2. In having respect to the most spiritual and inward part of the Commandment, the Commandment contains fugienda and facienda, sins to be avoided, and duties to be performed; and both these are either outward or spiritual. 2. As there are outward sins to be avoided, sins of the mouth, sins of the eyes, ears, hands, so there are inward sins, spiritual wickedness, evil thoughts, *Jer. 4. 14.* unclean lusts, *Mat. 5. 28.* inordinate affections, an evil conscience, and the like; now sincere Christians have an eye to, and hold a strict hand upon these spiritual wickednesses, labour to have their consciences purged, their hearts sprinkled

Sprinkled from an evil conscience, their affections and lusts mortified, Galat. 5. 24. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts: their care is, not only that they be no Drunkards, nor Swearers, nor liars, nor Rainers, nor Oppressors, nor of proud, froward, fretful, impatient carriages and behaviours, but they would not covet, they would not lust, they would not be of a proud, impatient, fretful, envious, unpeaceable heart, they would not think an evil thought, nor a vain thought should lodge within them. 2. As there are outward duties to be performed, praying, hearing, works of mercy, &c. so there are spiritual duties, purely spiritual, as the internal acting of faith, and love, and hope, and the fear of God, the souls choosing of God, cleaving to God, rejoicing, delighting in God, meditating of him, &c. Exact Christians have a special respect to these spiritual duties, in the exercise whereof stands chiefly their living in an holy fellowship, communion, and acquaintance with God; and for outward duties, their care is to perform them spiritually, they pray with the mouth, and pray in the spirit; they praise the Lord with their lips, and offer up their hearts as a spiritual sacrifice; they hear with their ears, and with their understandings also; they labour to bring their souls under the word, to pour forth their souls in prayer, to draw forth their souls in their very aims, Isa. 58. If thou draw forth thy soul to the hungry. psal. 69. 10. I chastened my soul with fasting. Oh, Brethren, if this be to walk exactly, then how much loosenesse doth this discover in us? loosenesse

ness in our very duties ; men do not only drink like *Libertines*, and swear like *Libertines*, and neglect duties like *Libertines*, but perform duties like *Libertines*. Thou that usest to pray in thy Closset, or in thy Family, or in the Congregation, in an outward formal way, and dost not pour out thy soul in Prayer, thou prayest like a *Libertine* : thou that fastest, and doth not chastise thy soul with fasting, thou fastest like a *Libertine* : thou that hearest, and dost not bring thy soul under the Word, thou hearest like a *Libertine* : This is loose praying, and loose hearing ; loose from the Rule, which requires the exercising of the inner-man as well as the outward.

3. In observing the Command to the utmost ; and here I shall give a fourfold further description of them.

1. They endeavour to get up their hearts to the highest pitch of affection, care and activity : They would be the best Christians, the most humble, the most mortified, the most patient, the most exemplary and active Christians : Not slothful in busynesse, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11. 2 Cor. 7. Yea, what care ; yea, what clearing of your selves ; yea, what indignation ; yea, what vehement desire , yea, what zeale, &c. A sincere Christian would be a zealous Christian, in his sincerity stands the truth of his Christianity ; in his zeale stands the hight of it. Zeal is not a distinct Grace, but the height of every Grace, Love in the height of it, Desire in the height of it, Grace and Resolution to follow God in the height of it ; A zealous Christian exerci-

excercises every Grace, performes every Duty, and doth it with all his might ; he is not willing to spare, or to favour himself, but will spend and be spent in the work of the Lord ; the flesh will be pleading for a little ease for moderation, it will be solliciting the Soul as Peter did Christ, *Pity thy selfe, favour thy self, thou wilt never hold out at this rate, thou wilt pull all the Countrey about thine ears if thou beest thus hot and forward ; but the Soul returns the same answer as Christ did to him, Get thee behind me Satan, hold thy peace slothfull heart, Let me alone, for I will speake for God while I have a tongue to speake ; while I have an heart, while I have an hand, while I have an eye, while I have a soul, while I have a being, I will follow on after the Lord, I will serve him, I will praise him, I will sacrifice all I am, and have, to him, and then come on me what will.*

2. They are studying and seeking out opportunities for service. Such Christians are of strait lives, but of large hearts ; of strict consciences, but of large desires and aims. Grace sets limits to their consciences, but none to their holy affections ; they never do so much for God, but they are studying how they may do more, Isa. 32. 8. *A liberal man deviseth liberal things ; a merciful man deviseth merciful things ; a righteous man deviseth righteous things, he doth not only excercise Liberality and Mercy, and work Righteousnesse, when he hath an opportunity put into his hands ; but he sits down and considereth what great things the Lord hath done for him, what marvellous loving kindnesse the Lord hath shewed*

shewed to him , and thereupon studies and casts about what greater things then yet he hath done he may do for the Name of God , as it is said of the Wicked , *Prov. 6. 14. He deviseth mischief continually : and Psal. 64. 6. They search out inquiry , they accomplish a diligent search ;* search out for every opportunity to work wickednesse to satisfie their lust : So Righteous men search out, and make a diligent search after opportunities to work Righteousnesse , *2. Sam. 9. 3. Is there not yet a man left of the house of Saul (saith David) to whom I might shew the kindnesse of God ? Is there not yet a poor Soul in distresse , to whom I might shew kindnesse for the Name of God ? Is there not yet a poor Family in mesery , to whom I might shew mercy ? is there not yet a poor Sinner to whom I might give coulce ? Is there not yet a poor Saint to whom I might administer comfort for the sake of my God , as it is said of the Devil , *He goeth up and down seeking whom he may devour ?* So may it be said of such , they go up and down seeking whom they might save and recover out of the snares of the Devil ; other men , what good soever they do , it is as little as may be , their consciences will not let them be quiet , but something must be done , when they have done so much as will but keep conscience quiet they have done : A sincere Christian hath his love to satisfie , his desires to satisfie , as well as his conscience ; he loves much , and it is not a little duty that will satisfie strong love .*

3. *They shun occasions and temptations , so fin , they would keep at as great a distance from sin as possible ,*

possible, they are careful to keep far enough within their line, they dare not venture to their utmost border, lest they go beyond it ere they are aware. A wary Christian having observed what things have proved snares and temptations to him, and have drawn him aside to iniquity formerly, will take heed how he comes nigh them again: If carnal society hath cool'd and damp'd his heart, and left a fleshy favour upon his Spirit, he will take heed how he comes into such company again: If going to his utmost liberty in the use of the Creatures, either Meat, Drink, or Apparel, hath enticed him beyond his bounds, he will be wary how he allows himself the like liberty, and will deny himself the freedome he might use, rather then again run himself upon danger; he is sensible of his weaknesse to stand against a temptation, and thereupon is the more watchful that he run not into temptation; men that are bold to venture into temptation, to venture into evil company, to venture themselves among frothy and vain persons, especially when they have proved what a snare such have been again and again to them, it is a sign that they have little fear of sin, care of their souls or consciences, or regard to God or godlinesse. A circumspect Christian dares not venture so: profane men wonder at them: why they will be no more free, nor familiar with them, nor so much as to sit and be merry with them: They think it strange (saith the Apostle) that you run not with them: Oh, the reason is, they are afraid of the hook, and therefore dare not meddle with the bait.

4. They abstain from all appearance of evil, that is the command, *1 Thess. 5. 22.* *Abstain from all appearance of evil:* they would live, not only sine criminis, but sine labe, not only without any fault, but without any flaw or scar upon them. *Oportet Cesaris uxorem absque suspitione vivere.* To the end they may cut off all occasion from them that seek occasion against them, they would do not only things honest, but things of good report too: they enquire concerning what they are about to do, not onely *an Liceat*, but *an Deceas*; not onely whether it be Lawful, but whether it be Comely: there may be divers things, that may be lawful in themselves, which are yet unseemly, may look with an evil face: *All things are lawful* (saith the Apostle) *but all things are not expedient.* A circumspect Christian endeavours both to keep a good Conscience, and to keep a good Name: He would keep a good Conscience for his own sake, and a good Name, as far as may be, for his Brethrens sake; his desire is, both to hold up the power of Religion, and to keep up the credit of Religion: and therefore it is he herein exercises himself, both to keep a *conscience void of guile in the sight of God*, and a *conversation void of offence in the sight of men.* The servants of Christ see that there are many eyes upon them, that will espy the least spot upon them, and therefore their care is, to keep themselves *unspotted of the world*; to carry themselves so, that, if it be possible, the world may have nothing to spot them withal: they are sensible how obnoxious they are to the severe and riged censures of the world, and that all the reproaches that

fall on them, fall on the Lord and his Gospel; what an out-cry is there in the world against those that fear God, as if they were bryars and thorns, the fire brands of the world, and the troublers of Nations, that turn the world upside down, as if there were no Lions in the world but Christs Lambs; as if Christs Sheep were all *Wolves*, and therefore to prevent this, and to put to silence the ignorance and malice of evill men, they endeavour as much as may be to gain upon the hearts, and get the good opinion of all men; to walk so, that they may not only profit, but please others, and render the Gospel the more lovely with them; they would not only *wrong no man*, *defraud no man*, *provoke no man*, but they would *displease no man*; give no man any occasion of offence or distaste at them and their way. Sinners, as much as the poor Saints, are cried out against for troublesome and unquiet, yet they are desirous rather to please then provoke you; they would please all the world as far as they may without hurting themselves or them; indeed they would not sin against God to please men. they would not wound their consciences to save their credits; they would not lye, nor dissemble, nor flatter, nor connive at you, nor comply with you in sin to gain your good will, but as far as they can, in order to your good, they are willing to become *all things to all men*; let them alone but to do their duty to God, to your and their own Souls; and if that do not displease you, they are willing in all things to do their best that they may not offend you.

And

And thus have I given you the description of these men, by the exactness of their walking according to the *Scriptures*, which stands in their endeavour, to have respect to every *Command*, to the most *inward and spiritual* part of every Command, and to observe every Command to the *utmost*; to this I shall add two things.

1. When they have done all that they can, after all this care and circumspection, they will acknowledge themselves *unprofitable Servants*; they are *thankful*, and bless God for helping them on in his way; but yet they are *bumble*, they are so far from boasting that they have done so much, that they are ashamed that they have done no more: Whil'st they admire the Grace of God towards them, they abase and abhor themselves in *dust and ashes*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, (no thanks to me) but to the Grace of God that was with me:* Some comfortable difference there hath been (blessed be God) betwixt my Conversation, and the ways of many others, but, *who hath made me to differ from another, or what have I, that I have not received,* and if I have received it, why should I boast, a, if I received it not? Something through the *Grace* of God hath been done, some service hath been performed; but what's all this to what I might have done; what's all this I have done, to what I have left undone? How small is my service, if it be compared with my sins? How few are my duties, if compared with my neglects? What's all I have done for God, to what I owe

to the Lord, to that which he hath done for me who
 hath redeemed my life from death, and crowned me
 with loving kindness? But oh! What's all I have
 done, to what God hath promised to do for me?
 What's my Work, to my Reward? What's my
 Race, to my Crown? Such humbling self-abasing
 thoughts as these, do Christians exercise them-
 selves in, to lay them low, even in the dust before
 the Lord. The profane World brand them for a
 proud Generation, who say to their Brethren,
Stand aside, I am bolier than thou: What more
 common in such mouths, precise, but as proud
 as the Devil. It's true, and Christians will free-
 ly acknowledge it, and take the shame of it upon
 them, that this pestilent Evil, *Pride*, is a weed
 that is apt to spring up in the richest Gardens;
 we can hardly be lifted up to an holy course,
 but we are apt to be puffed up with a vain conceit,
 we can hardly do well, but we are apt to think
 too well of what we do; many a precious Chris-
 tian, hath groaned and travelled in pain, under
 the bondage of a self-exalting heart; but yet
 he is bewailing it, and bemoaning himself for
 it; yea, his very disease helps on to a cure, his
 pride is a means to humble him, his being lifted
 up above measure, is the very *thorn in his flesh*
 that brings him low; he abhors himself the
 more, and abaseth himself the lower, for that
 he hath exalted himself so high; and the con-
 stant desire, and labour of his Soul is, to bring
 himself to, and hold himself in, such lowliness
 of heart and life, that whatever he be, or hath
 done, the excellency of the power may appear to be
 of God, and not of him.

2. Whatever they have done, they dare not trust upon it, or be found in it ; they dare not be found in their own righteousness, but count all things nothing, so that they may *win Christ, and be found in him.* They labour as zealously in the works of Righteousness, as they would have done, if this must have been their Righteousness, in which they must have stood before the Lord ; and yet they depend as singly upon Christ, and his Righteousness, as if they had never done any thing.

Before I proceed any further, let us a little consider, what it is of all this which hath been spoken of these men, *wherein their folly lies,* are they fools for making so wise a choice, for chusing the better part; those true Riches, that enduring Substance, those everlasting Treasures, which are laid up in another World; that they will not be cheated, nor be beguiled by the Devil of that better Inheritance, by thos toys and fooleries, the pleasures, and honours, & other vanities of this present world? that is, *are they fools that they are not brute?* Are they fools that they have taken the right way, to the obtaining ~~with~~ possessing that blessedness which they have chosen, that they do not content themselves with idle wishings, and hoping for that Heaven, and promise to themselves they shall not fail of it, though they never take that course that leads to it? that is, *are they fools, that they may be men?* and will hearken to their reasons and understandings, which tell them, that the end cannot be attained without the means? Are they fools that they will be upright, that they will not lye;

nor swear, nor curse, nor drink, nor riot, nor defraud, nor oppreis, but are willing to walk in all the Commands of the Lord blameless ? that is, are they fools ? that they are honest men ? Is this their folly, that they will not content themselves with a formal outside Religion , with outward Reformation, but will take care of the heart and inside, as well as the outside; will perform spiritual duties, purge themselves from spiritual wickedness; will make sure work, by laying the Axe to the root of that wickedness, which breaks forth in their lives, those lusts that warr in their Members ? that is, are they fools, that they are not hypocrites ? Is this their folly, that they are so free, and forward, and zealous in that which is good ? that is, are they fools, that they will love God so much, and fear God so much, and go on so far, and so fast in obedience to him ; that they do not give up the strength of their hearts, the vigour of their affections, and care, and labour, to the Deyil and their lusts, and reserve only some little for God and their Souls ? Are they fools that they will be so wary, and watchfull against sin, and temptations to it, that they I keep themselves so far out of dangers as may ? that is, Is it their folly, that they are not fools ? And forth ye wise men of the World, that urge the Saints with folly; read over all the particulars of that true description I have given you of them; and tell us in good earnest, if you can, in which of the particulars their folly lies ; is it that they are not brutes, that they are men, that they are honest men, that they are not hypocrites, or that they are not fools, that you account

count them such? Men are fools that they are so precise; 'tis all one, as if you should say, If they were wise, they would be brutes, knaves, and fools: Behold here the wisdom of this world, Hath not God made *the wisdom of the world foolishness*.

Thus we have seen, what this exact and upright walking is, as it respects the Commandment; Now shall we consider it,

2. As it respects Conscience: And thus I shall give this double description of these circumspect Christians.

1. They take great care of Conscience.
2. They give good heed to Conscience.

1. They take great care of Conscience, and take great pains about their Conscience. Their care they take is two-fold :

1. About the informing and instructing Conscience.
2. About the keeping Conscience tender.

1. They take great care about the informing and instructing their Consciences; Conscience is to be the *inward guide* of their way. As the Word is to be their *guide without them*, so Conscience is to be their *inward guide*: Their care therefore is, that it may not be a *blind guide*. Hence it is that they are so much in searching and studying the Scriptures; they are much conversant in their Bibles, they are observed to be frequent in hearing Sermons, diligent in Noting, and Repeating what they hear; are often putting their Doubts, and opening their Difficult cases, to those that are able to Resolve them; and all this to get their Consciences en-

lightened and instructed in the Will of God: Though there are many things that they are ignorant of, yet there is nothing that they are willingly ignorant of; their Desires and Prayers to the Lord, are the same with the *Psalmists*, *Psal. 119. 19. Hide not thy Commandments from me: and with Elius in Job, What I know not, teach thou me.*

2. They take great care to keep their Consciences tender: Tenderness of Conscience is sometimes taken for weakness of Conscience; A weak Conscience is that which is both weak-sighted, and is not able to discern between things that differ, but is very subject to mistakes; it mistakes good for evil, lawful for unlawful; and it's also full of troublesome and unreasonable fears, and endless scruples, which, as the crudities abounding in a weak stomach, do make it Keck and Rife, not only at that which is hurtful, but sometimes at that which is wholesome enough, it often fears where no fear is; this tenderness their endeavours are to cure, and not to cherish, True tenderness of Conscience is the perfection of it; a truly tender Conscience is a sound Conscience, which is quick of sense, and presently feels, and smarts, and is put to pain with any thing that is really an offence to it. A tender Conscience is as the Eye, the least dust that's blown into it, will make it smart; and this not from soreness, but quickness of sense. The dim-sighted World look upon all tenderness as weakness, and count all such, whose Consciences cannot down with any thing, as a company of sickly, weakly, brain-sick spirits; and

all their Doubtings and Dissatisfactions, to be humour, and conceit, and peevishness, and causeless fears; but this tenderness is so far from being the sickness, that it is the health and soundness of the heart; it was the commendation, and not the reproach of King *Josiah*, 2 King. 22. 19. *That his heart was tender.* This temper circumspect Christians are very chary of keeping their hearts in; and therefore any thing that would brawn, or harden them, they carefully shun; as the eye that cannot endure the dust that falls into it; is quick at its ward, to keep off any thing that would be noxious to it; and this is the Reason why Christians can bear any thing rather than sin, because it's this alone that's hurtfull to Conscience; they are hardy enough to bear afflictions, these are no prejudice to Conscience; it is not against their Consciences to suffer, but it is to sin; affliction may perplex the thoughts, and too much disquiet and distemper the passions, but will never trouble Conscience.

Object. *Tender Consciences!* Who more stubborn, and peremptory, and obstinate, and stiff in their way than these? Do you call this tenderness?

Sol. There is a threefold stiffness: Manifested,

1. In a refusing to receive conviction, touching any thing wherein they are faulty, or in an error.

2. In a refusing to revoke their errors, upon conviction that they are in a fault; let either of

these be charged upon them, and let the charge be made good, and then call them stubborn, obstinate, or what you will.

3. In a refusing to act contrary to their conviction, to do that which Conscience is not satisfied in; which, after their most free and fair debate, most candid enquiring into, and most impartial weighing, all that is or can be said for it, their conscience still tells them, they should sin in doing it: Hereupon, though all their Friends should come, and perswade, and entice them; though all their Adversaries should fall a scoffing and reproaching them, a threatening and persecuting them, yet still they refuse to yield. This stiffness is that *stedfastnes* which the Lord requires in them, and is so far from being inconsistent with true tenderness, that it is their tenderness.

If an Idolater should come and perswade such to worship an Idol; if he should threaten them with the Fiery Furnace, with the Lions Den, and yet they will not; Is this their stubbornness? Or, Is it not their tenderness? If an Adulterer should perswade them to uncleanness; If a Libertine should come and think to scoff them out of their strict and holy course; or to tempt them but to some little indulgence to their flesh, in some such way as this; Why? What hurt is there in a little mirth? What great matter is it, to take a little liberty now and then? Why should you think your selves wiser than other men, and yet they will not hearken? Will you call this their obstinacy, or their tenderness? Here be obstinate creatures indeed;

indeed; they will not be Idolaters, they will not be Unclean, they will not be Libertines, they will not be Liars nor Dissimblers, they will by no means be perswaded to rebel against God and Conscience, and therefore they be obstinate. Perswade them to that which is good, convince them that they are in an error, and then try whither they will be obstinate; tell them, *Friends, you walk disorderly, unchristianly; you are uncharitable, censorious, contentious, proud, vain,* and convince them of it, and see if they will not hearken to you, and thank you for your Admonition.

Christians, prove your selves to be conscientious by your tenderness, however the World go about to blast & reproach you with your consciences, and call your uprightness hypocritie, your tenderness obstinacy, yet part not with it so, but still resolve with *Job, chap. 27. Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me.* There is a double way wherein we may be said to remove our integrity :

1. By departing from it.
2. By helying it.

1. By departing from our Integrity; by turning aside to Iniquity; by being found false to God and conscience, and by a liberty in sinning, exchanging this truth and tenderness of heart for hardnessse and hypocritie. Take heed ~~not~~ do not thus depart from your Integrity. Beloved, you live in a World wherein conscience is like to cost you dear; if you will own any such thing as conscience, or conscientious walking, you are like to smart for it: Look to it that

that your conscience be sound, such as is worth the suffering for; do not suffer for the name of conscience or conscientious, but for the thing: look to it, that whatsoever you suffer for conscience, you suffer nothing from conscience; for your wronging, or abusing, or violating of it, sufferings for conscience, for an upright conscience, are precious: sufferings from conscience, from an evil an abused conscience, will be bitter. Let all the World be against you rather then conscience: Whom the World smites for Conscience God will heal, whom the World judges God will justify; but if our hearts condemn us, who shall plead for us, or comfort us? Carry your selves so, that conscience may be your comforter, not your tormentor: There is no torment like the stings and revenges of an abused conscience: Keep your consciences tender, and they will neither hurt you, nor suffer you to be hurt by others; keep your integrity, and it will keep you. The Psalmist prayes, *Psal. 25.21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me:* Let me not think to shift my self of trouble, by sheltering my self under sin; let me not go about to make my peace with my troublesome Adversaries, by casting in my Lot with them: let me never think to be beholding to iniquity for my safety; *let integrity preserve me.* Preserve thou me in mine Integrity, and let it preserve me. Christians, give the World leave to talk and do what they will, but when they have said and done their worst *keep you honest and you shall keep you safe:* Your consciences will be your confidence, and your security;

security ; *He that walketh uprightly shall walk surely.* Be not reproached out of your refuge, let not the world find you obstinate against your duty, nor yet yeilding to iniquity ; be not stubborn, but yet be stedfast, yeild to reproofs while you slight reproaches.

Let us be so gentle, flexible, easie to be intreated, so fearful to offend, so ready to please all men in all things, which are not against conscience, its peace and purity, that we may convince them, that in those things wherein we fix and do not yeild, it is because we *cannot*, not because we *will not* ; and let us yet be so stedfast in those things which would be a wound and defilement to conscience, that we may let them see it is but a vain attempt for them to think to reproach or persecute us out of our integrity ; let us be sincerely tender, not out of any ticklenes or weakness of conscience, or from groundless scrupulosity, much less from sullenness or humour, but from a sound mind and pure conscience.

Let us be universally tender of every evil, not onely of the greatest and most scandalous, but of the smallest sins, not onely of open sins, such as come to the view of men, but of the most secret sins, the most inward and spiritual wickednes, such as need fear no reproof but conscience ; let us be tender, not only of committing sin, but of any omissions or neglect ; not onely of our neglects of duties, but our negligences in duties, and that deadnes, formality, cursoriness, coldness, hypocrisy, distractions, which hence arise ; of the neglects or negligent performances of our duty to God, of our duty to men, to our families,

to our friends, to our enemies ; our not pitting them, not praying for them, not wishing them well, not doing them good for their evil, and indeavouring by our soft, meek, inoffensive and loving carriage towards them, to win and gain upon their hearts. Oh Brethren, we have much to blame our selves for, though evil men have little, or if they have more, they are so unhappy as not to hit upon the right, judging us and condemning us, not for our faults, but for the good that is found in us. But however, we have much to blame our selves for ; the Lord help us, we have many haltings, and many failings. Oh it were well for us if our hearts had no more to say against us, then men can say ; what unevenness and inequality is there in our goings ? what intermissions of our care and watchfulness ? what ever our aims and desires are ? what an universal regard soever we have to the Will of God, yet when we come to practice, in how many things do we halt and go awry ? It may be we dare not wholly neglect a duty, not a praying season, not an hearing season, but our hearts will presently be upon us and smite us for it ; but are we not often remiss and negligent in our duties, and go out with it without any trouble ? may be we take some care in the matters of our own souls, but what do we for our families, our friends and acquaintance ? may be we dare not *conform* to evil men, nor have fellowship with them in their evil wayes, but do we not *connive* at them ? may be we do not *render evil for evil*, *railing for railing*, but do we good for evil, do we pity them, pray for them, and labour by all lawful means to

gain

gain upon their hearts? may be we dare not be unrighteous or unjust in our dealings, but are we not unmerciful, unpeaceable, unquiet? we dare not lye, nor swear, or curse, but are we so watchful as we should be against idle and vain talkings, frothy and unsavory discourses? may be we cannot suffer any rooted malice to abide in our hearts, but are there not many sudden and furious fits of passion and anger breaking forth much bitter and provoking languages? are we not fretful and impatient, without ever laying it much to heart? doth conscience check us for, and make resistance against every evil? Let us be universally tender, universally careful: Oh that our consciences were but as tender as our lusts; our pride will not bear any thing that reflects upon our reputation, our covetousness will not bear any thing that is an hindrance to our gains, our passions will hardly bear the least cross or unpleasing word; how touchy are we at every little thing that does offend us? Oh if conscience were in every thing as tender as lust, what Christians should we be! but woe to us, whatever we should be, how short do we fall? how unequal are our goings? how unsteady are our tempers? sometimes tender, sometimes hard, sometimes watchful, sometimes heedless, in some things careful, in some things careless; how do we too much justify the wicked, and harden them in their reproaches of us? Let us press on with so much earnestness to this evenness and exactness in all our wayes, that it may be seen, that however we have not yet attained, yet we are following after, though we have not reached

to, yet we are reached towards it ; though through infirmity we fall into many iniquities, yet wee allow not to our selves a liberty in any ; such a conscience as this ; such a course as this will plead for it self against all the calumnies of the world.

2. By belying your integrity ; that is the sense in which *Job* speaks in the fore-mentioned Scripture, *I will not remove my Integrity* ; that is, I will never belye my integrity : call you me an hypocrite, or what else you please, God forbid that I should justify you by belying myself, and saying as you say. Brethren, do not out of any base fear, or to make your peace with sinners, do not say of your tenderness and watchful walking, this was my pride, or my hypocrisy, or my humour, or self-will, but stand upon your own uprightness, *Till I die I will hold fast my righteousness, and will not let it go : mine heart shall not reproach me while I live*, ver. 6.

2. They give great heed to conscience, they will hearken to, and follow conscience ; the voice of a well instructed conscience is the voice of God, and to this voice they will hearken, without turning aside in any thing, either to the right hand or the left. By turning aside to the right hand, I mean the same which *Solomon* does, by being righteous over-much, Eccles. 7.16. *Be not righteous over-much* : the imposing upon our selves such strictness, and those severities which God hath not imposed, the making those things to be sins, which God hath not made to be sins, and hereby making the narrow way narrower than the Lord hath made it : and this may be done.

1. By

1. By putting Religion in such things in which God hath put none, laying other bonds and burthens on our necks then those which the holy Ghost hath laid on us; the abridging and cutting our selves short of that Christian liberty, which the Lord hath not only allowed, but commanded us to maintain and stand fast in.

2. By putting more Religion in any thing then God hath put in it; by laying a greater weight and stresse upon the lesser and smaller things of Religion then God hath layed on them. By the lesser duties of Religion, I mean not any *moral duties*; the lowest of these, the lowest duties of mercy, justice, charity, truth, &c. are to be reckoned among the *mighty matters of the Law*, wherein we cannot erre by being too strict; we cannot be too just, or too true, or too merciful, nor too zealous for truth, justice and mercy, *M. th. 5. 19.* *He that breaketh the least of these Commandments, and teacheth men so, shall be called the least in the Kingdome of Heaven:* but by the lesser things of Religion, I mean the circumstantialls of the worship of God, the outward forms of worship, the gestures, &c. to be used in it. This is a being righteous overmuch, to put more in these circumstantialls then the Scripture hath put, to be so zealous for or against them, as if Religion stood or fell with them, *1 Cor. 7. 19.* *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the Commandments of God:* some there were that did hotly contend for *Circumcision*, and did put much of their Religion in that; others were as hot against it, and this was much of their Religion;

both these the Apostle checks, telling them, that *circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing*; these are not the things wherein Religion stands; keep the Commandement, fear God, walk before God in holiaesse and righteousness, let your zeal be spent that way, but trouble not your selves so much about these lesser matters. Yet two things must here be added.

1. This is not so to be understood, as if Christians were to swallow all things of this nature without examining whether they be agreeable to the Word of God or not, a due regard must be had to the satisfying of Conscience even in the smallest things; we may not yield to practise any little things which are against our Consciences, though we may not spend our zeal about them, as if Religion lived or died with them.

2. Even against these lesser things there ought to be zeal express, if they shold be like to prove destructive to the substantials of Religion, and hinder the main end which they pretend to promote; by this it appears what I mean by turning aside *to the right hand*, or being righteous over-much.

By turning aside to the *left hand*, I mean the same which *Solomon* there doth, by being wicked over-much, *Neither be thou wicked over-much*, This is not to be understood, as if there were any wickednesse which is not too much, a little is too much; it checks and restrains all liberty to sin, though in many things we sin all, yet let not sin get the head of thee, keep it under, keep it down as much as is possible, least it grow to that height, that it prove thy speedy

speedy ruin; by turning aside therefore to the left hand, understand all declinings to licentiousness: Either,

1. By making duties no duties, making sins to be no sins, and so making the way of life broader then Christ hath made it; and stretching our liberty beyond our line; as turning aside to the right hand, stands in the infringing of our liberty, in imposing such burthens which God hath not imposed, so turning to the left hand, stands in taking up a liberty which God hath allowed, throwing off those burthens which God hath imposed; making it no matter of Conscience to be strict, not only in the Circumstantial, but neither in the Substantials of Religion; so blinding Conscience, and bribing it over to side with lust, that it accounts it not a duty, to be so strict and so precise in any thing, but that there may be a greater latitude allowed, and a remitting of our care and zeal, especially in cases of any hazard or danger, that our zeal and strictness is like to cost us.

2. Making bold with duties and sins, neglecting known duties, running upon known sins, making ship-wreck of conscience to satisfy lust; when though conscience stands convinced, that holiness, in the strictness of it, is our duty, and that licentiousness, and living after the flesh, is our sin; yet we will indulge to our selves, our fleshly liberty.

Now this is another Character of circumspect Christians, they will walk according to conscience in all things, without turning turning aside

either way, either to the right hand, or the left; they are not willing to turn aside to the right hand, either by putting Religion in those things in which God hath put none, or by putting more of Religion in any thing, then God hath put in it; their zeal is for the substantials and weighty things of Religion; as for the circumstantial, though they will not act in these contrary to Conscience, yet they list not to be contentious about them, nor censorious of those, who agreeing in the main, do differ in these things from them.

But their great care is not to turn aside to the left hand; they will not for fear of being too precise, grow profuse and profane; but as the Apostle, Heb. 13. 18. *They have a good conscience, willing to live honestly in all things, endeavouring to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present evil world, being holy and harmless, the children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked generation.*

III. From this way they will not be withdrawn, either by any hopes or advantages on the one hand, or, by any fears or dangers on the other; they have not taken up Religion on such slight grounds, as to be either flattered, or frightened out of it. Christians, at their first engaging in the way of the Lord, do sit down and consider, what it will cost them to be Christ's Disciples; they count all the charges, they cast up all the damages that they can be subject to, before-hand; and fore-see, that there is enough

in Christ to make amends for all, and to save them harmless at the last, whatever falls. They count upon tribulations, losses, reproaches, and the greatest of temptations ; and if they did not fore-see, that the gain of Godliness would countervail all the losses and inconveniences it's like to be attended with, they would not have adventured on it ; but seeing for a certainty they can be no losers, hereupon they set up their stiffe, determining not to depart for ever. They take Christ and his Wayes for *better for worse*, for richer for poorer ; in prosperity and affliction ; they resolve to stand or fall, to suffer, and reign, to live and die with him. They promise to him, as *Ruth to Naomi*, Ruth, 1. 14. *As the Lord liveth I will not leave thee ; whither thou goest I will go, where thou lodgest I will lodge :* They will take their Lot with Christ where ever it falls ; Christ hath said to them, *I will never forsake you*, Heb. 13. 5. and they have said the like to him ; he that hath not thus engaged, is no true Christian ; this absolute resolution to be ever the Lord's, never to forsake him, is of the essence of true conversion ; he is no true Convert, that is content to follow Christ in fair weather only, as far and as long as he safely may ; a sincere Convert will follow Christ absolutely and unalterably. Now, being thus engaged, what ever befalls them, it is no more then they looked for ; they are called fools ; and counted stubborn, and refractory, self-will'd, self-conceited ; and they look'd to be counted such, and so it moves them not : they are set up on by flatteries, and tempted by outward pro-

specie; but it cannot prevail, *Thy money perish with thee*, saies Peter, *Germana illa bestia non curat pecuniam*; 'Twas said of Luther, Money will do nothing with them, Preferment will do nothing with them, Person, Banishment, Death it self can do nothing with them; *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy*, Acts 20. 24.

And as they will not be drawn to a total Apostacie from Christ, so neither will they be brought to allow themselves in any little deviation, Psalm, 44. 17, 18. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant, our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined thy way*: In what case they were, you may see in the fore-going part of the Psalm, *Thou hast cast us off, thou makest us to turn our backs upon our enemies, and they that hate us, spayl for themselves; thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us, &c. Though all this be come upon us; yet have we not, &c. Our heart is not turned back*: We do not repent of our choice, we do not wish our selves back amongst the prosperous world; we think never the worse of the Lord, or his way; we have as good a will to the Lord, high an esteem of his wayes as ever we had before we were thus afflicted; there's not the least abatement of our love and affection: If we were now to begin again, if we were now to choose whom we would serve, and know as much as we do now, we should make the same choice; our heart runs out the same way,

way, and in the same strength that ever it did ; those many waters that have run upon us, have neither quenched, no, not so much as cool'd our love ; neither have our steps declin'd from thy way : We have neither been turn'd back in our Affection, nor turn'd aside in our Practice ; through the grace of God our heart hath been kept upright, and we have made strait steps to our feet, Dan. 6. 10. We read , that when a Decree was made, *That whosoever should ask any Petition for thirty dayes space, either of God or man, five of the King, should be cast into the Lions Den* ; Yet Daniel would not forbear to pray to his God ; When he knew that the Writing was signed, he went into his house, and his Windows being open in his Chamber, he kneeled upon his Knees three times a day , and prayed, &c. Carnal men would have been ready to have said , What a precise Fool was this Daniel ? What great matter was it, that he stood so much upon ? It was not the committing a sin that he was urged to, but only the forbearance of a Duty ; he was not required to fall down before a Image, as the three Children were, or to worship any false God ; but to forbear, for a time, to pray to the true God : If it had been the worshiping before an Image that had been required, some would have reason'd this ; Why, what great matter had that been, to bow in the house of Rimmon, to bow before an Image, or an Alter, this is not praying to them ? There is a great difference betwixt worshiping an Image, and worshiping God before an Image ; What is there in all this ? But this, which Daniel stands upon

bath not so foul a face ; 'twas only the forbearance of his duty to God, and that only for a time : Was this such a crime, to forbear praying for a few weeks, for the saving of his life ? Or, if he would needs pray, he might have done it secretly, and kept his devotion to himself ; Must he needs keep his hours, and open his windows too ? Yea, he must do it, and he will do it : *Daniel* would not only continue his course of prayer, but he would not give his Adversaries occasion to think, that he was afraid to pray, he held it his duty (being called out to a confession of his Religion) to let his Adversaries know, that he had not such a slight and low esteem of it, that he was afraid to trust his God with his safety, whilst he continued in the exercise of his duty. It's true, that in matters circumstantial, such wherein there may be variation without prejudice to the substantials of Godliness, such which are not against their consciences, which they may submit to without sinning against God ; here they are not stiff, nor refractory, but for peace sake, and in order to the gaining upon the hearts of others, they are willing, with the Apostle, 1 Cor. 9. 20. *To become all things to all men*, in such things wherein they can satisfie themselves, they are willing, as far as may be, to gratifie the minds of others.

But for the Substantials of Religion, the matters of Faith, the matters of Righteousness and Holiness, the worshipping of God in Spirit and Truth, according to his own Ordinances

nances and Institutions, or any thing else of the same import with these ; here they are resolved what ever come upon them, or become of them, not to relinquish, or be drawn aside from them, by any solicitations, whatever ; they must obey God, rather then men ; they must follow God, though therein they forsake and provoke all the world : In matters which God hath left to their liberty, they are willing to use their liberty, according as it may be behoofull for the Gospell. In matters that concern their personal interest, as men, they list not, they ought not to be contentious ; spare them but the liberty to keep a good conscience, give them leave to fear God, and worship God ; give them leave to be holy and righteous, and to walk before the Lord in their integrity ; and for any thing else, you may persuade them to it with ease : But, if you entice them away from their God, or impose upon them, to the prejudice of a good conscience, you were as good spare your labour, speak no more to them in such matters, they are at a point , God they will follow , a good Conscience they will maintain what ever come on them , to the end of their dayes.

Thus I have given you a description of the Scripture-Precilians, which is summarily this ; They are the same with sincere godly men, men fearing God, who are inwardly renewed after the Image of God, who are adventurers for another world ; are gotten into the way of life, and are walking on carefully and heedfully in that way, whose aim and endeavour is to live ;

not according to the wills and lusts of men, but according to the Word and Will of God; not according to humour and fancy, but according to conscience. A People that will neither make the way to Heaven narrower than 'tis, by being scrupulous and nice, where God hath given them liberty; nor will make it broader than 'tis, by taking up looser Principles, or allowing themselves in loose Practises. A People that dare not adventure their souls upon that easie, formal, careless, outward way of Religion, that the most do; but are willing to make sure work, by walling to the exactnesse of their Rule, and living up to the height of their Principles; and who in this holy course, are stedfast and unmoveable, will neither be brib'd off, by the Flatteries, nor beaten off, by the Frowns of the World; but will retain their integrity, hold fast their holy Profession, and hold on in their holy course, and this to the death.

Concerning these men, I shall now prove and make evident to the Consciences of all impartial Persons, in the second place, That they are no fools, but truly Wise men.

In order hereto, I must first discover what's meant by Fools; A Fool is a man void of understanding (we are not now discoursing of natural Fools, but of those that are such upon a moral account) a man void of true wisdom. Wisdom is of Two sorts:

1. **Fleshly Wisdom, a Carnal Policy;** which consists in an understanding where the interest

of

of the flesh lyes, and in the ordering and managing of our selves and our affairs so that we may advance and secure this interest. By the interest of the flesh, I mean, all those things which please and gratify the flesh, and wherewith the fleshly minds of men are most delighted, and place their content and happiness in, as outward peace and quiet, outward ease and security, outward plenty and prosperity, outward credit and reputation; he that can order his affairs, and steer his course, so as will most advance, and best secure these his outward concernments, that which way soever the World go, he may live in peace, and quiet, and credit, and plenty, and pleasure, this is a fleshly wise man. Concerning this wisdom, the question is not; in this it will easily be granted, *That the Children of this World are wiser in their generation, than the Children of light,* can make a better shift to live in the World, to keep themselves whole in all changes and casualties the Apostle desclaims this wisdom, 1 Cor. 3. 12. we had our conversation in the World, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, and in simplicity and godly sincerity.

2. Spirituall wisdom, which consists, 1. in the understanding, where our main interest lyes, which is not in things temporal, meat, and drink, and cloaths, and money, and houses, and lands, and pleasure, and honours, but in things spiritual, in the love and favour of God, in a good conscience, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost; and in things Eternall, in that glory, honour, and immortality, which shall be given of God. 2. In ordering our selves

selves and wayes so, as to make the best provision for securing of this our great and eternal interest, that whatever miscarriages there may be in things of lower value and least durance, that wherein our eternal happinesse stands, may be secured to us; this is called in Scripture, *7 be Wisdome which is from above*, wisdome to salvation; and this is the only true Wisdome. God hath made, and will make all fleshly wisdome appear to be folly; concerning this true Wisdome, this spiritual Wisdome it is, that I shall now make good, That circumspect precise Christians are no fools, but the only wise men, and that from these Reasons.

1. God accounts them no fools.
2. They will not be counted fools at last, neither by God nor men.
3. The properties of wise men are found in them.
4. The Treasures of Wisdome are found with them.

Reas. 1. God counts them no fools; they are no fools upon a true account, whom the world counts fools, but they only are such whom God counts fools; as the Apostle, 2 Cor. 10. *Not he that commends himself is approved, but he whom the Lord commends*; so not he that condemneth himself, or is condemned of men for folly or simplicity is disapproved; but whom God condemneth. Beloved, whose judgement will you take? Will you stand to the judgement of God in this case? His judgement we have plain, Job

28. 28. Unto man be said, the fear of the Lord, this is wisdome ; and to depart from evil, this is understanding. Psal. 111. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdome ; a good understanding have all they that do his Commandements. The [beginning] of wisdome, that note, either 1. The entrance of Wisdome ; men never begin to be wise till they come to be godly. Look how long thou hast lived a stranger from God, in a carnal unconverted state, so long thou livest a fool ; thou never camest neer the threshold of true Wisdome till thou learnedst the fear of the Lord. When the repenting Prodigal came to his Father, he came to himself, his understanding returned to him ; he was besides himself before, but then he came to himself. 2. The top or height of Wisdome ; *Caput sapientiae*, the word signifies, a godly man, for true wisdome is the head, & not the tail ; excellent Wisdome is found in him. In these, & multitudes of other Scriptures, you have the judgement of God concerning these men. God is infinite in Wisdome, and knows all things and persons what they are, and God is true, and all things, and persons are certainly what he sayes they are. Are you wiser then he ? Will you believe your own conceits and apprehensions before the word of the All-wise and true God ? Either you must make sinners fools, or God a liar.

Reas. 2. They will be accounted no fools at last, neither by God or men : They only are to be accounted fools now, that will be accounted such at last ; at present mens eyes are blinded,

ded, they cannot discern betwixt light and darkness, betwixt wisdome and folly, and so are subiect to great mistakes; but at last mens eyes shall be opened; this blind world shall then see, and look upon all the wayes and transactions of men here below, and all the various states and conditions of the several sorts of persons in the world, with another eye then now they do. When the designs, and ways, and actions of men shall be brought to their issue, when all Vizards shall be pulled off, and all faces and hearts shall be made bare, and naked, and open, then every one will see who have behaved themselves wisely, and who have plaid the fool, 1 Cor. 3. 13. Every mans Work shall be made manifest, and thereby every man shall be made manifest, the day shall declare them: If you ask, what day? I answer, the last day, when every man shall have finished his work, the day of Judgment, which is both a day of tryal, when all shall be proved and examined what they are, and a day of recompence, when every man shall be rewarded according to his work. Let this now determine the question; let those persons, who will be both by God and men, by good men and evil men, accounted fools at that day, let them be accounted fools now, and let those men be accounted wise now, whom God and all the world will account such in that day of tryal. Now the world are divided in their judgements, some think Christians fools, others think them wise, but at last all the world shall be agreed, and of one mind, and those that shall be judged fools then, by the common judgement of all, let them

pass for such now. But you will say, what is this to the satisfying our present judgment; how can we tell now, who shall then be accounted wise or fools? I answer, besides that the Word is before you, which is the Law, by which that judgment must proceed, from which you may easily learn what mens judgment shall be: besides this, let every man appeal to his own conscience. Here are two sorts of persons in the world, one sort are such as own God in the world, and follow God, and follow the Scripture, and withdraw themselves from the loose and vain wayes of the wicked, spending much of their time in praying, and hearing, and meditating of God, exercising themselves in holy watchfulness over their hearts and all their ways; labouring in all things, that both here and hereafter they may be accepted and approved of God. The other sort live at their ease and their pleasure, mind their Farms, and Oxen, and bellies; hope they shall do well enough hereafter, but do not much trouble themselves, nor take any care or pains about it. Let every man ask his own heart thus, which of these two sorts do I think in my conscience will be found fools, and which wise in the day of Judgment? Beloved, will you speak your consciences in this thing; if it were put to your choice amongst which of these two sorts you would be found, and take your portion at last; what choice do you think you should make? whether would you be found amongst those that spend their dayes in ignorance, or those that seek after the knowledge of God? amongst those that labour and strive to make

make sure the love and favour of God, or amongst those that take no care about it, but leave it at uncertainties? Amongst the vain or the serious, the diligent or the sloathful, the heavenly minded or the earthly minded? Dare any of you say, let my soul stand among the drunkards, and gluttons, and gallants, and good fellows; among the covetous, and proud, and loose, and careless ones of the earth? Among the formalists, the mockers and scoffers at the pure ways of the Lord: let my portion be with them, my place be with them; let my sentence be according to their sentence? If you dare not make this your choice or desire, to be found amongst such at that day, you thereby may perceive what the verdict of your own conscience is in this case; whatever you say of them now, your conscience tells you, that these will be found the only fools in that day, and those only wise, amongst whom you would choose to stand.

Reas. 3. The properties of wise men are found in them.

I shall instance but in two.

1. They understand themselves aright.
2. They build sure.

1. They understand themselves aright; for, 1. They understand wherein their *Interest* lies; we say of a wise man, he is a man that understands himself, that he understands what he hath to do: Christians are men of understanding, they understand what that one thing is for which they live, in the pursuit and securing whereof, if they prosper,

prosper, they know they shall be happy, whatever else they miscarry in, and upon their miscarriage, wherein they know they are undone whatever else they prosper in; they know there is but one thing needful, and that that one thing is their eternal Interest, the blessednesse to come, the happiness of the other World, the obtaining and enjoying God, for the portion of their Souls; be thou mine, and I have what I look for, either in Heaven or Earth, *Psal. 72.25.* *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and in Earth there is none that I desire in comparison of thee?* *Psal. 4. 6.* *There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* *Psal. 27. 4.* *One thing have I desired.* *Phil. 3. 13.* *This one thing I do.* Christians have but one thing wherein they are concerned, God is all they have to regard; this one thing they have in their eyes, they see before them where their happiness lies; and they are able to say, *Whom have I?* or *what have I but thee?* This one thing is in their hearts; one thing have I desired, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord for ever; and this one thing is in their hand too, the work and the businesse they mind to carry on; *This one thing I do, forgetting that which is bebind, and reaching forth to that which is before; I presse to the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Sinners, you that take your selves to be so wise, you are a company of poor mistaken creatures, mistaken in your Interest, you are in the World, you know not for what, you know not what you have to do here, you are those men, upon whom God is said

said, *Psal. 14.* *To look down from Heaven, to see if there were any among them that did understand and seek God.* (*That did understand*) that is, that knew that their great businesse they had here to do, and their only happinesse which they had to seek, lay in God, and that thereupon applyed themselves to the seeking of God ; but behold, they were all out of the way ; there were none amongst them that did understand this, that this was their great concernment, and thereupon they were all out of the way, quite off from that work that they were sent hither about : it is no wonder you shoot so wide, when you mistake your mark ; it is no wonder you do you know not what, when you know not what you should do : Is this the work you came into the World for, to Eat, and Drink, and Sleep, and Buy, and Sell, and Marry, and bring forth Children, and load your selves and them with burthens of thick clay ; to Sport, and Play, and Riot, and Laugh, and spend your dayes in meer vanity and foolery ; are there no higher things then these, which God hath set before you, and more worthy your choice and labour ? Have you no Souls to mind that are of an immortal being ? and are there not lasting Riches, abiding Pleasures, an enduring substance that may be had, that must be had for these souls of yours to live upon, or else they will be eternally miserable ? and do you not understand that your Souls are of more value then your perishing Carkasses ; and that the making provision for your souls is of far higher consequence then the pampering of your bodies ? Will the losse

of your souls, be recompenced by all your bodily pleasure and plenty ? Will not the saving your Souls, ballance and make amends for any losses, crosses, miscarriages in your fleshly Interest ? If you do not understand this, yet do not judge them fools that do.

2. They understand their way , *Prov. 14. 8.*
The wisdom of the prudent, is to understand his way. The wisdom of a Merchant lies, not only in his skill , to chuse and deal in the right and richest commodities, which will bring in the greatest , and most certain gain ; but in his understanding the mystery of his trade , whereby he may upon the best and surest tearms, procure these commodities , to know the best way of dealing and traffiquing for them : Christians by their being acquainted with the Scriptures , and having been trained' up in the School of Christ , are come to understand their trade , the mystery of godliness ; they have not only learn'd to prize the salvation of God , and the glory and blessedness of the world to come, but are well acquainted with the way that leads to it : Carnall men are ignorant of the way, though they understand in general, that Religion is the way to Salvation, yet poor miserable creatures, they mistake their Religion, any little smatterings of the knowledge of God, with some profession of Faith and Repentance, especially if it be joyned with some little-outward devotion , now and then calling upon God for mercy; this they count Religion enough to bring them to Heaven, and any thing that's more then this , they think it more than needs : these are the fools indeed, if we may be-

lieve the Scripture, Jer. 5. 4. *Surely they are poor, they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord.* Sinners are wise enough in their own ways ; the way of sin they know, the way of lying, and oppression, and unrighteousness, the way to wealth, and honour, and temporal preferments, they sufficiently know, they have studied and travelled these ways, and are well acquainted with them ; but all this while they are foolish children, surely they are foolish, *they know not the way of the Lord.* Christians are wise, and herein their wisdom stands, *they know the way of the Lord* ; they have a light without them, shewing to them this good way ; they have a voice behind them, telling them, this is the way, walk in it ; they have made it their business, to enquire and study and travel this way ; surely these are wise, they know the way of the Lord, they know their way to Heaven ; if they know not the way to be rich in this world, yet they know the way to be rich towards God ; if they know not how to live Honourably in the world, yet they know how to live honestly ; if they know not how to please men, yet they know how to please God ; if they cannot keep a fair Correspondence with the world, yet they know how to keep a good Conscience in the world, if they know not how to escape Trouble and Affliction, they know how to suffer it ; if they know not how to escape the wrath of men, yet they know how to escape the wrath to come ; if this be wisdom, to be skilled in the matters of Religion and Righteousness, in the matters of Faith, and a good Conscience, to have found out the Way of Life, by which, to escape

escape from Hell beneath, then these godly men, are wise men; surely they are wise, they know the way of the Lord.

Obj^t. But you will say, Why may not we be in the right way as well as they? Why may not our way of Religion, be as good a way, and as wise a way, and as safe a way as theirs?

Sol. Will you make use of your reasons? If you will you shall answer this Objection your selves: their Religion and yours, are not two ways of Religion, but as to the Principles of it, are but one and the same: the difference betwixt you and them, is this, you take up but a little part of that Religion which you both profess, and you will have but little to do with that little of Religion which you do take up: you little mind or study, or are exercised in that which you count your Religion: these precise ones, take up the whole of Religion, and they give themselves wholly to the study and practice of it: they make it their busines to search the Scripture, that they may understand the will and way of the Lord, and to govern their hearts and order their lives in all things according to it: So that now, if you will answer two easie questions, you shall thereby, be able your selves to answer the Objection: the first question is, *Who are most like to be in the right either those who endeavour to practice all that they profess, or those, who though they profess the truth, do practice scarce any thing of it; but a small part of it, and that the lower, and less considerable part of it, the bare outside of it:* This is no hard question, I hope you'l acknowledge to be resol-

ved: and the second question shall be as easie; *Who is like to be in the right, the diligent Christian, that makes it his busines to study his Religion, or the careless Christian, that seldom spends a serious thought about it?* Answer but these two questions, and then your selves will be able to give a reason, why its more like they should be in the right then you. Brethren shew your selves men, here are a company of poor creatures of you, who have spent your time in ignorance, and idleness as to the matters of God and your Souls, who little meddle with that of Religion, which your selves say you must do, if you will be saved: you say you must believe, you must repent of your sins, you must pray to God for forgiveness, and yet what great strangers are many of you from these things: it may be if you consider it, you have often gone whole days and weeks together, and have scarcely ever prayed, no not so much as after your own fashion, nor scarce had any thoughts of Repentance, or asking God forgiveness: you eat, and drink, and go forth, and come in, and lie down, and rise up, and never so much as look up to God for his mercy and blessings: these others mean while, make praying, and reading, and hearing and minding God and their Souls, and their eternal State, their daily study and busines: now, what an unreasonable thing is it to imagine, that those who so little meddle with any Religion, or any thing of Religion, should be as like to understand it, as those that make it their daily work. Oh Beloved, how can you be so confident you are in the right, when you never seriously enquire,

quire, whether you be or no: and how can you think you have any Wisdom in you, when you trust a matter of such weight and importance upon a meer presumption? You are strongly conceited that you are as wise as others, and ~~is~~ as good a case, and in as good a way, and upon this conceit you venture your Souls. Friends, you are a sad wonder to me, and I do so much wonder, that men should think, that carelessness is as good as diligence; licentiousnesse as good as strictnesse; that, that loose, and blind, and easie way which men take up, is as good and as sure, nay, a better, and more certain way of life, than the strict and industrious way of the despised Saints: that I very much wonder, how men that believe, and know any thing of the Scriptures, can make themselves to think, that, that softish, dull, lifeless way, which they satisfie themselves in, can give any of them the least hopes of Salvation.

2. They build sure, so that whosoever or whatsoever falls, they stand sure for ever. They are those wise builders: of whom Christ speaks, Matth. 7, 24. *Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man which built his house upon a Rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not.* Psal, 26. 12. *My foot standeth in an even place.* All other persons and parties stand upon slippery places, and have but an uncertain standing. When they are in the height of all their glory and confidence, they are often gone in a moment. A Christian stands sure, which way

ever the wheel of Providence moves ; it moves
in favour of the upright ; he is still uppermost,
when he is undermost : he hath the better,
when he hath the worst : all the vicissitudes and
returns of Prosperity and Affliction, do make
no change upon him , as to the main : he is as
happy under all his outward losses , as in his
greatest gains : he's as honourable under the
greatest contempt that's poured out upon him,
as under the highest humane applause : he's as
safe in the greatest dangers , as when there is no
danger appearing : he's built upon that Rock,
whence the greatest winds and waves can never
beat him down : he's built upon the foundation of
the Prophets and Apostles, Eph. 2. 20 He hath
Religion , Righteousnesse, Innocency, yea, the
Truth and Strength of the Almighty God to
uphold him : if ever a Christian falls , Christ
must fall with him ; if ever a Christian falls,
the Scripture must fall with him : that Word,
concerning which Christ hath said, Matt. 24. 35.
Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Word
shall not pass away. He shall never be disap-
pointed of his hopes , unless faithfulness can
disappoint : He shall never be deceived , till
Truth becomes a lye : he shall never wholly be
overcome , unless Almightynesse become weak-
nesse. The carnal World build all their hopes
and comforts on the sand, on the wisdom of the
flesh, on the riches, strength and multitude of
their partakers : On the successes of their car-
nal counsels : they bottom their very souls up-
on meer fancies and presumptions , upon that
wood , key and stubble , the doctrine, inven-
tions

tions and traditions of men ; nay , they have their foundation in the dirt and mire , they strengthen themselves in their wickedness : If Iniquity be able to support them , if Unrighteousness be able to exalt them ; if Ungodliness can secure them , they have something to lean upon ; but if Righteousness be it that must carry it , if a good conscience , simplicity and good sincerity ; if the Favour and Faithfulness of God , an Interest in Christ , be the only sure Refuge , then where are the generation of the ungodly ? When they are in the height of all their glory , 'tis but one turn of the Wheel , and they are thrown off their legs , their hopes and their joys vanish , and all their thoughts perish . If God , and Christ , and Scriptures , and Conscience be of any Consistency , Christians have enough . If unrighteousnesse and wickednesse should carry it in this World never so clearly and constantly ; yet if righteousness and holiness will but carry it in the World to come , Chritians are safe enongh . Carnal men , who build their hopes on this Earth , when the Earth is shaken , their hopes are shaken , their hearts are shaken , and they are even at their wits end . But saith the *Psalms* , Psal. 112. 7, 8. *The heart of the righteous shall be established , he shall not be afraid of any evilitydings ; his heart is fixed , trusting in the Lord.* Psal. 46. 2, 3. *Therefore will not fear , though the earth be removed , and the mountains be carried into the Sea , though the waters thereof roar and be troubled , though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.* Though all the earth should be in an uproar , though the

whole world should be turned topsy turvy, yet we will not fear, though the Mountains shake, yet our hearts shall not shake. Are they not wise men, that are gotten into such a case?

Reas. 4. The Treasures of Wisdom are found with them. You will yet, it may be, be ready to say, What have they gotten by their Wisdom? Where is the Income and Revenue, that all their Wisdom hath brought them in? If you were to give us an account of their losings, you might easily bring in a long Bill: some of them have had so little wit, as to lose all they have: but, will you take your Bill, and write down' their gains? Why, if you will hearken to me a while, I will shew you what they have gained: They have gotten great Treasure, as poor as any of them seem to be, they are the richest men in the World. Particularly:

1. They have gotten the *Pearl*, Christ is theirs: they are those Merchants, *Matth. 13.* which have sought goodly Pearls, and they have found the Pearl of greatest Price! *Cant. 2.6.* *My Beloved is mine; that Corner-stone which is laid in Zion, which is a precious stone,* *1 Pet. 1.* he is theirs, that Pearl which is the price of souls, the Ransome that was paid for them, which is the food of souls, their bread and water, the living Bread, the water of Life, of which who so eateth and drinketh, shall live for ever: He is theirs: God hath given them him whom they have sought, *Isa. 9.6.* *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given:* He is become their own, and they

they call him their own. *My Lord, and my God,* said *Thomas.* *My Saviour,* said *Mary.* This is the richest of treasures, that comprehends all treasures in it: this will supply all their necessities, make up all their losses: they want nothing that have Christ to be theirs. Other men have Riches, and I have none (saith the Saint) I, but Christ is mine: Other men have Friends in the world, and I have none, oh but I have Christ to be my Friend: Other men live at ease, in their pleasures, but it is not so with me, but Christ is mine, and I find rest and pleasure enough in him. When I look upon the pomp, and the glory, and gallantry of the World, I must say, *These are none of mine:* When I look upon the rich Fields, the pleasant Valleys, the fruitful Hills, the Oxen and the Sheep, the Gold and the Silver of the Earth, I must say, *These are none of mine:* But yet the Pearl is mine, and that is all things to me,

2. They have gotten the *white Stone*, the Stone of Absolution, Rev. 2. 17. *I will give him the white Stone*, which is a token of Absolution; It was a custome among the Heathens, to absolve persons by giving them a white Stone, and to condemn by giving a black Stone. Rom. 5. 10. *We have received the Attonement:* God is reconciled, our sins are forgiven, our souls are absolved from those black bills of Indictment which were laid in against us: we have received the Signal of this Attonement, the holy Dove, the Spirit of the Lord in our hearts, and the sense of this Attonement hence arising, the peace of God possesseth our hearts: we taste and

and see what it is to be at peace with God, in those smiles from his face, in those dawning of the light of his countenance, and the shedding abroad his love in our hearts. Sinners, whileit you carry with you every one his black stone, his sentence of condemnation, the earnest of eternal vengeance, these have their white stones, the marks of their absolution, and the earnest of their eternal blessedness. When you look on their naked backs, their hungry bellies, the cold lodgings that are the lot of many of them, you will say, Surely these are a poor and foolish people; but see that precious stone they carry with them wherever they are, there you may behold their riches and wisdom. When you consider your own fulness and braveries, your dainties & delicates, your ornaments and jewels, your possessions and honors, you are transported with pride and jollity, and have almost forgot that you are men; but what signifies that black stone in thy breast, that guilt thou carriest in thy conscience? Consider sinners, what it is to have God your enemy, wrath your portion, the curse cleaving to your possessions, your sentence of death written in your hearts, and upon your consciences, and then you will think those men have gotten something, that have gotten their absolution from all this.

3. The *white Robe*, or the Sanctification. Holiness is not only imposed on Christians as their duty, but bestowed on them as their priviledge: Therefore the Lord promises to his people as their encouragement to suffer affliction, *Heb. 12.*

10. *That thereby they shall be made partakers of his*

his holiness: This is the precious *Treasure* of the *Saints*, Matt. 12. 35. *A good man out of the good Treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things*; A good man, though he hath no *Treasure* in his *House*, nothing in his *Purse*, nothing in the *Field*, yet he hath a good *treasure* in his *Heart*, a *treasure* of *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*, a *treasure* of *Grace* and *Holiness*, a *treasure* of *Faith* and *Patience*, and *Humility*, and *Mercy*; and this is a rich *Treasure*. 'Tis the rich in *Faith*, rich in *Grace* & *Holiness*, that is a rich man indeed: a heart full of *Grace* is a better *treasure* than a *house* full of *Gold*; as much as strong men glory in their *strength*, as much as wise men glory in their *wisdom*, as much as great men glory in their *greatnesse*, one grain of *Grace* is more worth than all: As much as *Holiness* is despised and trampled upon by the men of this world, it is of greater value than *Mountains* of *Gold* and *Silver*.

Holiness is the *health* of the *Soul*, the soundnesse of the *Spirit*: *Health* is a poor mans portion: look what *sicknesse* is to the *body*, that is *sin* to the *Soul*, the *disease* of it; *sinful soules* are sickly *souls*; and as it is with sickly *bodies*, so it is with *sinful souls*, they are neither fit for *employment*, nor capable of any *comfortable enjoyment*: A sick man can do little *service*, and can take little *comfort* in any *thing* he hath: *Sinful souls* are good for nothing, and can take *comfort* in nothing that is good: *Holiness* is the *health* of our *Souls*, *Sanctification* is the *Restitution* of the *soul*, with all its *faculties*, to their *rectitude* and *soundnesse*. By *holiness* the *soul*

is,

s, First, Made fit for service, and that is a great blessing: What a misery is it to be an uselesse, unprofitable Lump, good for nothing: to be serviceable, and that to such a high and noble ends, as the honouring the Name, the carrying on the Designs, the shewing forth the Vertues of the Eternal God, what a blessed thing is it? 2. The Soul by Holinesse is made capable of enjoying the Lord, and all the gifts of God: What is the reason that Christians under a decay of Grace, and overgrown with corruption, can take comfort in nothing? Tell them of the promises of the Gospel, of the priviledges of the Gospel, of the Joyes, and Hopes, and Glory to come, they can take no pleasure, they can find no sweetnesse in it: Promises do not affect them, Priviledges do not affect them, future Hopes and Expectations do not affect them: What is the reason of this? Oh! their souls are sick and cannot taste or relish any thing that is good: by how much more healthy men are, by so much more delight they can take in their businesse: by so much more comfort they can take in their friends, by so much the more pleasure they can take in their meat and drink, or any thing else that they enjoy: And so it is with a healthy soul, by how much the more holinesse, by so much the more sweetnesse: Duties are sweet, Ordinances are sweet, Promises are sweet, the Society of the Saints is sweet, the Meditations of God are sweet: They can truly be said to enjoy their Friends, to enjoy the Promises and Ordinances, to enjoy their very duties, to injoy God in all they have or do,

do, whose souls are in such an holy healthful state. This is another of the Treasures of wisdom which the Saints have gotten, they have gotten Holiness.

4. *The adoption*, Rom. 9. 4. *Who are Israelites, whose is the Adoption?* There is a twofold Israelite: an Israelite after the flesh, such were the natural children and posterity of Abraham; and an Israelite after the Spirit, such are all Believers, the children of the Faith of Abraham; And according to this distinction of Israelites, there is a twofold Adoption, outward and visible which pertain to the naturall seed; Inward and invisible, which is the peculiar priviledge of the Spirituall seed, all the children of the faith of Abraham. The Adoption comprehends in it, 1. *The grace of Adoption*, whereby the Lord hath given us the Relation of Children, and a right to all those priviledges and blessings that flow from that Relation, John 1. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God.* 2. *The Spirit of Adoption*, Gal. 4. 6. *And because you are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying. Abba Father:* This Spirit is called the spirit of Adoption, not only because it works in us the dispositions, and dutifull affections of Sons, but especially because it witnesseth our Sonship, Rom. 8. 15. 16. *Ye have received the spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the Children of God:* The Spirit evidences and witnesseth our Sonship, and thereby enables us to cry, *Abba, Father*, that is, to call God Father; Gives us the

the boldnesse and confidence of children, to come to him on all occasions, to make our complaints to Him, to make known our wants, our fears, and our dangers to Him: to make our Requests to Him, to depend on Him for provision, for protection: to put in for a Childs Portion, for a share in his Riches: to lay claim to, and to lay hold upon the Inheritance of Sons: to cast our care upon him, and to quiet and comfort our selves in the sufficiency of our Father. I have nothing, saith the child, but from hand to mouth, but my Father hath enough: This is a blessed and glorious Priviledge that Christians have obtained, to be the Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty, 1 John 3. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Seemeth it a small thing unto you, said David, to be the Son in law of a King? Why, what King was it? It was one that was none of the best, and yet he was a King, and that was a great thing, for such a poor man as David was, to be Son in law to a King: but what is it to be Sons and Heirs to the King of Glory? The Lord fayes to all his Sons as the Father of the Prodigal said to his eldest Son, Luke 15. 31. *Son, thou art ever with me, all that I have is thine: Son, Daughter (saith the Lord) thou shalt be ever with me, all that I have in Heaven and Earth, all is thine.* Matth. 5. *Blessed are the peace-makers: Why so? They are the children of God: Gods children are blessed children, not one of them shall go without their Fathers blessing: The Lord hath not only, as Isaac, a blessing for one of his children,**

but

but as Jacob, he hath a blessing for every child: If thou be Gods Child, God, even thy God, wil give thee his blessing.

5. The Kingdome; *Matth. 5.* *Theirs is the Kingdome of Heaven*, Luke 12. 32. *Fear not little flock*, for it is your Fathers pleasure to give you the Kingdome. To whom is the Kingdome given? To the little flock, not to the heards of swine, the droves of wild beasts, the profane multitudes of this wild and wicked world, but to the little flock of Christ, those few that he hath called out of the world, who follow him, theirs is the Kingdome: What Kingdome? Why, the Kingdom of Heaven, a Kingdome of Glory, a Kingdom of Righteousnes, a Kingdom of Peace, a Kingdom of Joy and blessednes, the everlasting Kingdom: And here we are fallen upon that heighth, and depth, and length, & breadth, which cannot be fathomed or measured, here is the wisdom of Christians, they have gotten the Birth-right and the Blessing, the Sonship and the Inheritance, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, here is the Faith, and Patience, and Hope, and Prayers, and Sufferings, and Labours of the Saints, the riches of their Faith, the fruit of their patience, the matter of their hope, the return of their prayers, the reward of their sufferings, the end of their labours, the Everlasting Kingdome.

Now Judge upon all this which hath been said, whom you will account the wise men, shall those be accounted wise, whom God, or those whom men account such? Shall those passe for fools now, who will be found wise at last? Are those

the

the wise men, who never understood what they had to do here, and so never minded nor heeded that necessary work for which they were sent into the world? Are our Infants and Children, that minde nothing else but their play, and their meat, and their clothes, afe those the wise ones of the world? Are they the wise builders, who have laid their foundation on the Sand? When the Winds, and the Floods, and the Waves have broken down, and blown away all that you have been building, will you then boast of your Wisdome? You that count your selves such wise men; and demand what the Saints have gotten, tell us, What have you gotten by all your wisdom? The Saints have something to shew for themselves, as witnesses of their prudence, Christ, the hidden Manna, that living Bread, that they have laid up for themselves against a time of need: that Peace which they have gotten to support them in a time of trouble: these are some things to shew they have not foolishly lost their time: every Grace that they have gotten, every Comfort that they have treasured up, there is something more to shew: every dead lust pleads for them: Sampson's dead Lyon was not a greater proof of his strength; then Christians dead Lusts are of their Wisdom: they have gotten the birth-right and the blessing, who was the wiser of the two, *Esau* that sold the birth-right, and lost the blessing, or *Jacob* that got both? They have gotten the Kingdome too, theirs is the Kingdome of Heaven, whilst others have been dividing the spoile here below, scrambling for shadows and fancies, sharing the Dominions

minions, and Dignities, and Preferments; and pleasures of this world amongst them; these have been laying up in store for themselves a good foundation, against the time to come; doth this speak them such a foolish company as you would make them? Have they made such a wise choice, and taken such a wise course, and yet must they go for fools? Is this your serious and sober Judgement? Do you in earnest think that in that charge which the Gospel hath made upon them, they are changed for the worse? that in the choise which they have made of God, rather then the world, of Christ, instead of their lusts, of things eternal, before things temporal, that they have herein chosen to their loss? Is this your thought, will ye write down this as your judgement, and put your hand to it, and be content that this writing should be produced at the last Judgement, as the Test by which you will be tryed, whether you are wise or foolish? Are you Christians, and do you believe the Scriptures? are you not yet ashamed that any such thoughts should come into your hearts? Will ye say, The Devil is the best Master, and he's a fool that wil not be his servant, but Christ is an hard Master, and none that's wise will venture after him? Will you say, that *Moses* was a fool, in refusing to be called the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season! that the Apostles, and the Disciples were fools, that *Peter* and *Paul* and *John*, and *James* were fools, with the rest of those holy Men and Women, who denied themselves, too k

up their Cross and followed Christ: and that the Scribes and Pharisees, and Publicans, and Harlots, and Drunkards, and Gluttons; that made a mock and a scorn of him, and them, had more wit then they? Is not this the very thing you say in charging folly upon those, whose aim and desire isto walk in the same steps that those primitive Christians walk'd in before them? Is this your Christianity? Is this your Reason, and Religion, and Honesty? Speak out your heart in plain terms. No man would hearken to Christ, unless he were a fool: no man would be holy, unless he were a fool: no man would leave his lusts, and his pleasures, and his liberties, and his vanities, unless he had first lost his wit: Or, at least, no wise man would take up more of Christianity, then the name, and the shell, and the shadow; none but a fool would make sure work for his Soul, would go thorough with Christ and Christianity, would be an inward, hearty, resolved, universal, sincere Christian. Would any wise men, put it out of doubt, that Christ is his, put it out of doubt, that his soul is safe, that he's passed from death to life, and shall never come into condemnation? What do your brutish hearts and ways speak lesse, or other then this? Sinners, Is this all the wisdome or honesty you have, thus to speak or think? if it be, Be it known unto you all, that these foolish Saints have more wit, than to count the reprobates of such brutish Spirits, to be any disparagement to them or their profession; and therefore, if you will, mock on, and go on, to admire your selves and the Oaks which you have chosen, and the gardens which

which you have desired whilst you despise these and their ways: but however, whilst they have this assurance; that God doth not count them what you call them, that [you] will not call them *at last*, what you call them *now*; you most give them leave, (though they think never so meanly of themselves) yet, still to have the same high thoughts of their God, of their Gospel, of that holy profession and way that they have chosen.

Use 1. Let the ungodly world hence learn to have a better Opinion of these men, and to forbear reproaching them: think with your selves upon what have been said: These men may be wiser then we are aware of, they may be honest men; we may be mistaken, these may be the *Israel of God*, those *Nathaniels* of whom Christ saith, John 1. 47. *Bebold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile*: these may be the *little flock on whom it is the Fathers pleasure to bestow the Kingdome*: these may be those *little ones*; whom *whoever offendeth, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the midst of the Sea*: And what if they should be so? In what case are you then, thy have reproached and persecuted them? But I must be bold to tell, there's no *May be*; in the matter. I question not, but if you would impartially weigh what hath been spoken, and what shal yet farther be spoken, you wil see that if God hath any people in the world, these are they: and therefore my advice is, that *you refrain from these men, and let them alone; left; if you do go on, you be found fighters against God*.

Ob. But where be there any such? There be some that make a fair shew, and make specious pretences to the strictnes of Religion, but they are hypocrites and deceivers; and these are they that we only speak against.

Sol. 1. Let this be granted, That such men as have been described, (if) there be any such, are truly wise men; that men of such principles, that men of this Profession, (if) they really be what they profess, and live according to their principles, that these are men of wisdome: do but grant that godliness is wisdome, and the fear of the Lord is understanding: I would that I could bring you thus far, heartily to grant, that godliness hath an Excellency in it, and that a life led according to those principles of godliness, which have been laid before you, is the most excellent life: Hence these two things will unavoidably follow, 1. That by how much more exactly and strictly any persons live according to the principles of godliness, by so much the more have they attained to of true wisdome: If godliness be our wisdome and Excellency, then by how much the more precisely godly any persons are, by so much the more wise and excellent, by how much the more precise a Christian or a godly man is, by so much the more he is a Christian, or a godly man: and therefore, let never any man be blam'd for that he is so much, but that he is no more precise. 2. By how much the more loosely any persons live from the Rales of Religion, by how much the more liberty they take to walk after the flesh, by so much the more foolish they are: and so you may without contro-

versie

versie conclude that what ever these precise people be, you that are Libertines (to be sure) are fools.

2. Are there none such ? What, hath God no people in the world, hath the Devill gotten all ? God hath a people somewhere , and a peculiar people: whom he hath chosen to salvation, whom he hath redeemed, and called, and justified , and sanctified, and set apart for himself, from the rest of the world; all are not *Israel*, all are not Disciples, but there are some whom God hath peculiarly set apart to himself, from the rest of men, and where are these to be found , if not among these precise walkers ? The peculiar people of God are , as hath been sufficiently proved , an holy people , an hearing people , a praying people , a zealous people , a watchfull , painfull , industrious , sober , meek , mercifull , patient people , and all this in sincerity : Now where shall we look to find out such a people ? Must we rake the kennels , and search the sinks of the earth ? must we seek in the Ale-houses , or Taverns , or Play-houses ? Shall we take out the drunkards and riotous , the swearers and lyars , the covetous and oppressors , the vain ones of the earth , the blind people that bruitish generation that know not , nor mind not the Lord or his ways , and say of any of these , surely here they be , these are the people of God : here be the men that are no hypocrites : these are that *Royal Priesthood* , that holy Nation , that peculiar People , whom God hath called to shew forth his praise , before the world ? Sinners , if you have so much reason or conscience , as to conclude that none of these are

they, then tell us farther, who, or where they are, or else at last acknowledge, that if God hath a people any where 'tis amongst those that you have reproached.

3. If you say, there be hypocrites amongst them, and these are they that you speak against, and not against those that are upright, let me give you this double advice.

1. Take heed you do not mistake your *Mark*, do not shoot at Saints indeed, under the name and disguise of hypocrites, do not count that hypocritie, which God accounts sincerity; you may be mistaken (as I told you before) and what if you should be mistaken? what if it should prove, not only that the men which you reproach for hypocrites, God should account sincere: but if the very thing which you call their hypocritie, the Lord counts their Excellency, what if it should be so? Then you have shot a fair shot; every reproach which you have thus cast out, is as so much dirt which you have thrown into the Face of God, so many darts which you have shot into the Apple of God's Eye: you who are so free in reproaching Professors, take heed that it be not found that the ground of all your evill language against them, and evil usage of them, be not for that they are, but for that they are not hypocrites.

2. If they be hypocrites, and only such that you speak against, take heed you mistake not your *Arrow*: do not cast that upon them for a reproach, which is good: do not take good names to reproach evil men: If they be hypocrites any of them, and you know them to be such, call them

them hypocrites, but do not take the name of Saint, or Precisian, or holy Brother, and put them as marks of disgrace and scorn upon him: he that calls a Saint hypocrite reproaches the *Christian*, he that in scorn calls an hypocrite, Saint, or holy Brother, reproaches *Christianity* it self.

Use 2. But I have yet a greater request unto you then to have a good Opinion of these men, and no longer to reproach them: my request to you farther is, *I hat you would come in and be of this number* Some of you it may be, will be ready to reply, He shall have hard work that will perswade me to be a precisian: and truly, I am afraid so too, if all that the Devil can do, will hinder it, if all that your carnal reason and fleshly lusts can do, if all that your sinful Companions can do will hinder it, I shall be sure enough not to prevail with you: yet know, that the motion which I make to you, is from the Lord, and if you deny me, you therein deny him, and if you deny him, you must come upon it, there's another day coming when he will deny you; You say you will not be perswaded: but what it is you will not be perswaded to? Why, this is it, you wil not take the yoke of Christ upon you, you will not be advis'd, nor be rul'd by him, so as to live as he would have you live, but you will have your liberty still to walk according to your own mind and heart: that is, you will not be Christians; Will you not? Are you in good earnest? Are you consent that the Lord should take you at your word, and for ever give you up to your hearts lust, and let you alone to walk in

your own counsels? Are you content from henceforth to give up your hope in Christ? are you content to be damn'd? Brethren, this is the choice you are put to, either an holy life, or everlasting death: either you must submit to the Yoak of Christ, or you can have no benefit by the Cross of Christ; either you must kiss his golden Scepter, or be broken in pieces with his Rod of Iron: refuse to follow him in his Kingdom of Grace, and you thereby shut your selves out of the Kingdome of Glory: Whereof, that I may the more effectually convince you, I shall yet farther prove to you, both by Scripture and Reason, that this strict and precise way of Life, is so undoubtedly and absolutely necessary to salvation, that whosoever doth not thus walk, cannot escape the damnation of Hell.

I know carnal men are confident that they shall be saved without so much ado, and this is that which hardens them in their sins. Their strong conceit that the way is not so strait and narrow as many would make them believe: they doubt not but they have found out a shorter and easier way then this: and what is this easier way? Why, 'tis but *call upon God for mercy, keep thy Church, do no body any wrong, be no drunkard, no swearer, no adulterer: or if thou be sometimes overtaken, ask God forgiveness, cry God mercy, and then hope well, never despair of Gods mercy, fear not, thou shalt be safe enough.*

Now I shall make it plain to you, that this loose and easie way of Religion, will certainly leave every soul that goes no further, to perish everlastingly; and that this strict holy life, which hath

hath been described, is indispensably, necessary to Salvation. Beloved, the matter I am upon is weighty: a mistake in your Religion is mortal, if that which you have taken up for the way of life be not so, you are undone for ever; and that this your easie way is not it I shall now make evident.

1. From Scripture: Let us but seriously examine and weigh those many high expressions which we find in Scripture, in the *Commands, Exhortations, Instructions, Instances, Promises and Prayers* recorded in it: in all which, the one way of life is described, and then let any reasonable man judg, if all this amount to no more then that poor, and pitiful, and empty thing, which carnal men count their Religion.

1. For Scripture-Commands consider these, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate, looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God: Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling: not sloathfull in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; Put off concerning the conversation, the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceiptfull lusts and put on the new Man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness: Wash thine heart from thine iniquities, that thou mayest be saved, How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but (speak ye) that which is good, to the use of edifying, that may minister Grace to the hearers. Walk in love, love one another, love your enemies, blesse them that curse you, pray for them which persecute you; render to no man evil for evil, but overcome evil with goodness: mortifie your members*

members which are upon the earth: walk in the spirit, abstain from all appearance of evil, be watchfull: stand with your loyns girded, and your lights burning.

2. For Scripture-instructions consider these: The Grace of God which bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live righteously, godly, and soberly in this present world: Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit, &c. and to keep himself unspotted of the world. They that be Christs have crucified the flesh with affections and lusts. He that is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement. He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Of every idle word men shall give account at the day of judgement. If any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that mans Religion is vain.

3. For Scripture-Instances; David is said to be a man after Gods own heart, and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that the Lord had commanded him all the dayes of his life, save only, &c. Of Josiah it is recorded, That his heart was tender and perfect with the Lord his God, and that he turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. Paul professes that he served the Lord instantly, night and day: that forgetting those things which are behind, he reached forth to the things that are before, pressing to the mark, &c. The life which I now live in this flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. To me to live is Christ, to die is gain. I forun, not

as uincertainty, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air, but I keep under my body, and bring it into subiectson, lest preaching to others I my self should become a cast-away.

For Scriptures Promises consider these, Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the meek, the mercifull, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the pure in heart, they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for they shall see God, theirs is the Kingdome of Heaven: they shall be comforted, filled, and great is their reward in Heaven.

For Scripture-Prayers consider these, The God of peace sanctifie you wholly, and I pray God that your whole spirir, soul and body may be preserved blameless untiel the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work, to do his will: working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight.

Multitudes of such like Scriptures might be added, but these may suffice. Now wherefore are all these things written? wherefore are these strict commands given, these holy lives of Saints left upon Record, these promises made, and these Prayers kept upon the file? Are they not all written for our learning, to let every man and woman understand what manner of persons they must be, what manner of lives they must live, if they will be saved? If lesse, or a lower Religion would serve, to what purpose is this waste? If it be so, people may forbear to charge Precisians with keeping more adoe then needs, and lay in their charge against the Scriptures, for requiring more then needs. But do you thinke indeed, that the Scriptures have spoken these

these things in vain? If it be not in vain, if all this be comprehended under the one thing needful, if all this do but shew us the one and only way of life; if we must be thus renewed and changed in our minds, and must thus holily and unblameably order our lives, or else we cannot be saved, as the Scriptures mentioned many of them expressly affirm, then what will become of that poor confident multitude we are now dealing with? Does all this amount to no more then keeping your Church, saying your Prayers, learning and saying over the Creed and the ten Commandement, living peaceably with your Neighbours, paying every man his own, crying to God for mercy when you have committed a sin, and the like? Can you call this cold, lifelesse way, your striving *to enter in at the strait gate*? Is this your *working out your salvation with fear and trembling*? Is this all that is meant by fighting the good fight of Faith, by wrestling against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers, by being instant in prayer, fervent in spirit, watching, and running, and pressing toward the mark? Brethren, if there be but one way of life; if all this which hath been represented to you out of the Scriptures, be to shew you from the Lord, what a strait way this one way of life is, and if you will compare your way you depend upon with it, me-thinks you should need no more to convince you of your dangerous mistake hither to, and to leave you more ready to embrace the Exhortation I am pressing upon you; namely, To come in among the number of, and take up the holy course of these circumspect Christians.

But

But if this be not sufficient, I shall yet make it more evident by Reasons drawn from the Scripture, which I shall give you in these Six Propositions.

1. The Gospel requires, as indispensably necessary to Salvation, *Inward Holiness*, or the renewing of the heart, or inner-man. Needs this any proof to them that understand the Scriptures? There must be *another Spirit*. Numb. 14. 24. *A new Heart*: Ezek. 36. 26, *A clean Heart*, Psal. 73. 1. *A true heart*, or *an upright heart*, *sprinkled from an evil Conscience*, Heb. 10. 22. Ezek. 18. 31. *Make you anew Heart*, and *a new Spirit*, for *why will ye die?* Jer. 4. 14, *Oh Jerusalem, wash thine Heart*, from *wickedness*, that *thou mayest be saved*. What do these Scriptures, especially the addition in the two last, for *why will ye die?* and [*that thou mayest be saved?*] What do these import less than this, That there is no Salvation possible, there is nothing but certain death and destruction, to those whose hearts are not washed and made new. John 3. 3. *Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the Kingdome of God. Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the Kingdome of God.* What is the product of this new Birth, or this Conversion, but a new Creature? Some there are, it is true, that interpret this Conversion, which is made so necessary to Salvation, to be nothing else but the coming of persons from *Judaisme* or *Paganisme*, to *Christianity*, to the owning and embracing the Christian Faith. But if this be true, then all that

that believe Christ to be the *Messiah*, and are baptized, & believe in the profession of the Christian Faith, shall be saved. Come ye Drunkards, come ye Adulterers, Lyars, Covetons, with all the profane Rout of Nominal Christians, and keep an Holy-day to the memory of these new Doctors, who brings you such a large and easie Gospel, as will carry you all to Heaven, with all your lusts and ludenesse upon your Backs. But is this true: Is this Gospel: Is this all the conversion that is necessary to Salvation: It cannot be: For,

First, There are many that embrace the Christian Faith that are Hypocrites, and shall Hypocrites be saved?

Secondly, There are many such Converts that walk disorderly, *whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things*, Phil. 3:18. Of whom the Apostle there tells us that *their end is destruction*.

2. This inward Holinesse which the Gospel requires, stands not in some sudden and unconstant good thoughts, or some transient good actions, but is an *holy frame or habit*: thus much is intimated in the forementionied expression, *Another Spirit, a new Heart, a new Creature*. An holy thought, a good desire is another thing from a new heart: they cannot so much as evidence that the heart is renewed, as in a renewed heart there may be some evil thoughts, and evil lusts arising and working, so some good thoughts and affections may spring up in an evil heart: true holinesse is not a fit, but a frame: there may be fits of passion, or of pride, or of envy

envy (too often) in a *Saint*, and yet in the main he may be a *Saint* still: There may be fits of devotion, fits of zeal sometimes in a sinner, and yet he is a sinner still. Holiness is the temper and constitution of a *Christian*, his new nature that abideth in him.

3. This inward habitual holiness stands in an universal compliance of the heart, with the whole Will of God: the heart that is formed after the Image of God, is formed to the Will of God, *Psal. 40.* *Thy law is within my heart:* not a piece, but the whole: every word and tittle of it. *Thy Law is within me.* The Law is said to be within the heart of a *Saint* in a double sense.

First, It is published, and revealed, and made known in the heart: it is understood by the soul, there is the light of the Word shining in every *Christian*

Secondly, It is embraced, approved, consented to, there is the love of the Law in the heart of a *Christian*; the heart closes with it, and all that it requires, as a good word, and worthy of all acceptance.

A *Christian* doth not only accept the Promises of the *Gospel* as good words, and comfortable words, but can heartily write, *Good is the Word of the Lord*, upon every precept: he liketh his Duties as well as his Privileges, his Work as well as his Reward: This towardlinessse of heart is set forth in those expressions of a willing mind, a ready mind, a forward mind. And as his heart is towards his work, so is it for any work the Lord calls it to: he hath respect to all the Commandments;

he

he woldnot bewithout one leafe, no nor one line
of the whole Word of God : he *is ready to every
good work*: he would not have one duty abated to
him of all that God hath required: he would not
have one sin allowed to him of all that God hath
forbidden him: He that sayes concerning any
one word in the whole Will of God, This I must
have struck out, or be dispensed with in it , ere I
can be a Christian , his heart is not upright:
he that would have any one sin to be no sin, any
one duty to be no duty, any one sin to be allowed
him, or any one duty to be abated him , is no
Christian.

4. This inward habitual Holinesse is such as
bears the sway, and hath the preheminence in the
heart: though sin be there still, yet where there is
true Grace sin is an underling , and brought into
captivity , it hath lost that power and interest
which it had in the Soul before, and the heart is
now given up to God: the stream runs Heaven-
ward, the stream of the Thoughts, the stream of
the Affections run that way: God and the way of
Holinesse hath a greater share and greater power
in the heart then all the world: there is more
love to God, stronger resolutions for following
God, then can be ballanced by the highest in-
terest of the flesh. God and the World stand
as two suitors for the heart, but God carries it
from the World: so that , as before , it followed
the World with the neglect of God, now it will
follow God with the neglect of the World: be-
fore it would , it may be , mind God and god-
linessse, as far as it could without prejudice to its
worldly interest, so far as it could with honour,

or ease, or safety: but now it will minde the world & its fleshly interest, so far only as is consistent with godliness and a good conscience: this is sincerity, and the clearest & most certain evidence of it. Can we imagine that we love God sincerely, when we love the world better? When we love our ease, or credit, or pleasures, or carnal friends better? When these can do no more with us, and command us further than God and glory. Matth. 10. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me,* Luke 14. 33. *Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.* If there be any certain unquestionable Truths in the whole Doctrine of the Gospel, this is one of them, That whosoever hath true saving-grace, hath more love to God and Holiness, than to all things else whatsoever. Though it be controverted, Whether common Grace and saving Grace do not differ more than in degree? Yet this is without controverse, That saving-Grace doth contain in it an higher degree of love to God, than to all things else.

5. This inward, habitual, prevailing Holiness, where ever it is, will infallibly bring forth this strict, precise and holy life. For,

First, That holiness in the heart wil bring forth holiness of life, is as naturally certain, as that he that hath the life and reason of a man, wil act as a man, as that a root wil bring forth such branches and fruit as partake of the kind and nature of the Root: As that a fig-tree wil bring forth figs: that an olive-tree will bring forth olives.

Secondly, It is as certain, that according

to the proportion of holiness in the heart, Such will be the proportion of it in the life ; if holiness bear the sway in the heart, 'twil bear the rule in the life ; if that little good that is in the heart, be held as an underling in the Soul, there after wil the life be ; this is as certain, as that the Soul governs the Body.

Thirdly, It's no less certain, that the lowest degree of the prevailing holiness in the heart, will bring forth this precise holy life, in the sense I have described it ; that is, though there be not perfect holiness brought forth, though he that hath a lower degree of true grace, fall much shorter of that perfection, than he that hath an higher degree ; though there be many failings, and wanderings, and weaknesses, and turnings aside to iniquity, through corruption and temptation, yet thus far the lowest of Saints have arrived, That his aims, desires, endeavors are after a perfectly holy life ; be hath a respect to every Commandement, to every Duty; he doth not habitually allow himself in any iniquity ; there is some change in his course actually appearing, and this he proposes to himself, and sets his heart upon it, to grow up daily to a more thorow universal conformity to all the principles of godliness laid down before him in the Scriptures, and made manifest in his conscience,

This is as certain as the two former ; he that is sincere would be perfect : in the true love of holiness, is necessarily included a love and longing for it in the perfection of it : He that loveth holiness for it self, will love it most when it is

most it self, in its perfect; on, and love and longing wil in fallibly bring forth labouring, and following after. Therefore,

6. Whosoever is not truly a person of a precise life, is certainly in the state of damnation: This so clearly follows from the former Propositions, that it needs no further proof. He that is not inwardly, habitually, universally sanctified; he that loves any thing more than God or godliness, that is, he that is not converted and new born, and so become a new Creature, is actually in the state of damnation; and he who is not a precise walker, is not thus converted, new born or sanctified: for whoever is made this new Creature will infallibly make it appear (as hath been proved) by this newness of life.

You see, Beloved, to what issue this matter is brought: either you must take up this strict way of holiness, or be reprobates from God. Whosoever there be amongst you, that have the most rooted enmity in your hearts, against this holiness of Life, and have cast the greatest slight and contempt on it, and those that thus live, and as *Michal* did *David*, do despise them in your hearts: whoever among you are most peremptorily resolved against harkening to any farther treaties about this thing, casting them off with the greatest scorn and indignation, I must be bold to tell you from God, That if you live and die in this mind, God must cease to be true, the Scriptures must be prov'd to be a lye, the Doctrine of the Gospel a meer forgery or falsehood, or you will be shut for ever out of the Kingdom of God,

And do you not yet see enough to perswade you to come in and be of this number? Are you not yet convinc'd that 'tis your duty, that 'twill be your wisdome to be such? That none but Fools and Brutes will continue to be Libertines? Whilst you charge folly on the Saints, will you at last prove your selves to be the only fools? And will you verifie that Proverb, *Bray a fool in a Morter, and yet his folly will not depart from him?* Shall it be said of you, Let them be instructed, let them be convinced, let them be warned, yet still all's one: fools they are, and fools they will be? Oh ye fools, when will ye be wise? Search the Scriptures, and learn of them, come unto Christ, and learn of him: and if he do not speak the same things which here have been spoken, if he do not teach you the same Lesson which here you have been taught, then go on and take your liberty still: but if Christ says, Be holy, if Christ says, Be circumspect, if Christ says, Be perfect; and you still refuse to hearken, then carry this inscription upon your fore heads, *We have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is there in us?*

John,



John 1. 27.

Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

We need not go far back, to find out the sense of these words, which they fully enough contain within themselves. The occasion of them was this, *Philip* calls *Nathaniel* to come to Christ: *Nathaniel* being called, comes: and coming to Christ, our Lord gives his Judgement of him.

In the words, we have, 1. A note of Observation, *Behold*: This hints to us two things; 1. That a *Nathaniel*, a true *Israelite*, is a worthy Sight, worth the observing: *Behold an Israelite*. 2. That a *Nathaniel* is a rare sight: We do not use to put a *Behold*, on that which we see every day.

2. A Description of *Nathaniel*, and in him of a sincere godly man. 1. He is *an Israelite*: *Israel* was first the name of *Jacob*, who upon his wrestling, and as a Prince, prevailing with *God* in Prayer, had this new name given him of *God*, and was thenceforth called *Israel*: from him, afterwards, the whole Generation of the *Jews* were called *Israel*: in the new Testament, all the People of *God* were called *Israel*, *Gal. 6. 16*. Both in the Old Testament and the New, *Isra-*

lites were such as had the account of the people of God, whom God had separated and set apart for himself, as his peculiar people, out of all the rest of the world; so that an *Israelite* here, notes, *one that belongs to God, a godly man.*

2. *An Israelite indeed*; *Ανθρωπος*, one that's *truly an Israelite*; not *after the flesh*; but *after the Spirit*; not in shew and appearance, not in conceit or his own or others Opinions, but in reality.

3. *An Israelite without Deceit*, *in whom is no Guile*; who is no Jugler, or crafty Dissembler, that did only personate, bear the face, and act the part of an *Israelite*, but an honest, down-right, plain-hearted *Israelite*.

In all this we have a ful description of a sincere godly man; he is an *Israelite*, one separated to God, an *Israelite* indeed: not in conceit or fancy, but in truth: not in deceit or guile, but in singleness of heart.

That which I intend for the Foundation, on which to build my discourse, is, *An Israelite indeed*. Thence let the Doctrine be:

Doct. A sincere godly man is no Fanatick: or, Godliness is no fancy. As there is an *Israelite* in Conceit, so there is an *Israelite* indeed: as there is Godliness in shew, so there's Godliness in truth: Godliness is no Fancy.

The great design of Satan and his Instruments is against Godliness, to resist it, disgrace it, and if it were possible, to root it out from under Heaven: And because whilst Godliness appears to be, what indeed it is, in its own lustre, glory, and excellency; all such attempts against it,

it, are like to be vain and ineffectual: therefore the plot is, to cast a mist before the eyes of this Pur-blind world, and to make them believe that there is no such thing, or that it is not what it is; that 'tis *a mere fancy*, there is nothing in it: That which men call Godliness is but a conceit, a mere dream of some brain sick person, who thinking themselves wiser and holier than the rest of the world, and being strongly opinionated of their own ways, and intoxicated with their own imaginations, whilst they would perswade others that they are in the dark, and under strong delusions, are most of all mistaken and deluded themselves.

Now, because this is such a mischevous Engine, to hinder the propagation of the Gospel, and to hold men back from that true Godliness which is necessary to Salvation, and without which they perish everlastinglly: I shall through the grace of God, prove and make as evident as the light, the truth of the Doctrine proposed, That *Godliness is no Fancy*; and that the sincerest and strictest godly men, are most unjustly and, unreasonably termed *Puritanaticks*, of any persons in the world. By *Godliness*, I mean, that sincere and strict profession and practice of Religion, which is above the size, and beyond the measure of the common sort of people, who call themselves Christians; that which the Scripture calls, *Pure Religion, the Power of Godliness, walking with God, walking in the Spirit, living in all good conscience*.

By a *sincere godly man*, accordingly I understand, the same person which I in the fore-going

Discourse meant by a *pricise* or *circumspicte* Christi-
stan: one that will not adventure his soul on
that cheap, easie, outward, careless way of Re-
ligion, which the most do, but labours to make
sure and thorow work, by setting himself to live
up to the height and exactness of those prin-
ciples of Religion, which he hath received from
the Scriptures.

When I say, That *Godliness is no Fancy*: by a
Fancy, I mean, that which bath no being but in
the imagination: that which hath no foundation
in the Scriptures, but it is a meer conceit or airy
Notion, a figment of mens own brains. This is
the reproach that the prophane world cast upon
strict Godliness, that it is a meer fiction, or a
dream of mens own hearts, that the inward
likeness to God, the exact walking with God,
living in fellowship and communion with God,
the joy of God, the life of Faith, the Souls ex-
ercising it self upon God and the Lord Jesus,
and the like, are meer conceits, there are no
such things, but they are mens own dreams and
delusions.

Now, this is that which I shall prove and make
good to you, That this Godliness, in its greatest
purity, preciseness, and spirituality, is not such
an empty thing, but is fully and really that
which it asserts it self to be, and hath clear foun-
dations in, and an evident conformity to, that
good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, reveal-
ed in the Scriptures.

The proofs which I shall bring in, shall be such
as have respect to the speciall parts of it: where
I shall make it manifest:

i. That

1. That the Doctrines and Principles of Godli-
ness are *real Truths*.

2. That the Duties and Comforts of Godli-
ness are *real Duties and Comforts*.

1. That the Doctrines and Principles of Godli-
ness are real Truths. Wisdom hath her Pillars:
Godliness is not a Castle in the air, but is a build-
ing which hath foundations, *Heb. 6.1.* I shall in-
stance in some of the chief of these Principles,
and shew you :

1. Concerning the *Being of God*, and his *Holi-
ness*: That this is a certain truth, that *there is a
God, and that he is an holy God, and a friend to Holi-
ness*: If there be any real and evident truth in
the world, this is a truth, that *there is a God: Ant
Deus est, ant nihil est*, Either there is a God, or
there is nothing: We may as well say, when we
see the Sun, and the Moon, and Stars, and the
motions of them: when we see the Earth, and
the several Creatures upon it: when we see our
selves, Men and Women walking up and down
thereon, That all this is but conceit, that our
eyes deceive us, that our selves and all the things
we see, are but phantasmes, and apparitions; as
we may question whether there be a God, *Rom.
1. 20.* *The invisible things of him from the Crea-
tion of the world are clearly seen, being understood
by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power
and Godhead.* And to question whether God be
an holy God, is the same in effect, as to question
whether there be a God: to conceive that
there is a God without Holiness, is to imagine
that there is a God that is no God: Sin is such a
defect and imperfection, as is utterly incon-
sistent

met with such an infinitely perfect Being: and to question, whether God be a friend to Holinesse. is to question, whether he be a friend to Himself.

Atheisme, whatever the foolish world ignorantly talk, is the greatest and most notorious ~~Ex~~ atheisme Psalm. 14. 1. *The fool sayes in his heart, there is no God, he fancies there is not: and Prophaneness, that causes men to conceive of God as not so holy and righteous as he is, is next to Atheisme, Psa. 50. 21, These things thou hast done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order, before thine eyes. These things thou hast done: Thou hast done wickedly, hast been a lyar, a slanderer, a drunkard, a partaker with adulterers: And I kept silence, I let thee alone, and did not presently testify my dislike or displeasure against thee: hereupon thou conceitest, because thou art let alone in thy sin, and didst not presently smart for it, that I liked it well enough, and was altogether such a one as thy self: that thou hadst a God after thine own heart, after thine own soul, that was never the lesse a friend to thee, for that thou wert so great a friend to thy lusts and wickednesse: Thou thoughtest this, such a foolish conceit thou hadst in thy heart: I, but it was but a conceit, I will make thee know, that am another manner of God then thou vainly imaginest: I will have my time for thee, when I will reprove thee for all thy wickednesse, and convince thee of thy folly, and set all thy sins in order before thee.*

· Sinners, You that either think that there is no God, or because he keeps silence, lets you alone in your sins, lets you flourish and prosper in your wickednes, thereupon conclude? He is a friend, one that favours loosenesse and ungodlinesse; he will have his time for you, to convince yon, and reprove you out of these vain conceits, and make you know that he hates and detests both yon and your wayes; and that he loves that holines, and is a friend to those holy Ones, which for a time he may suffer you to despise and trample upon.

Revs. 3. 9. Behold I

I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan
which say they are Jews and are not, but do
lye) behold, I will make them to come and worship
at thy feet, and to know, that I have loved thee.
 You will not now be perswaded, but God will make you know whether you will or not, that these are they whom he hath loved: Please your selves with your own wayes, and blesse your selfes in your own hearts while you will, continue your confidence, that God is no such enemy to you, that he is not so hard and severe againit ungodlinesse as men speak, that God is a friend to Ignorance, Formality, Licentiousnesse, and counts such *his best Subjects*: And as for those which make such a talk, and such a shew, and keep so much adoe about holinessse and strictnes, make your selves believe, that God is as much aginst them as you; and that he doth not like, that men should be so fearfull of sin, and watchful against sin, and zealous for holinessse; that he likes those best, that vvill take their ease and their liberty, and their pleasure:

Yet

Yet know, that God wil have his time for you to make you of another mind, when he shal come to reckon with you, to reprove you, and set your sins in order before you.

2. The Doctrines concerning Sin are certain Truths: I shall mention but these Four:

1. That man is a sinner:
2. That sin is the greatest of evils.
3. That spiritual sins are the greatest of sins.
4. That sin is the root of all misery.

1. That man is a sinner: A sinner by nature, a sinner by practise: in a sinful state, 1 John 5. 19. The whole world lyeth in wickednesse. Running on in a sinful course: Psal. 14. They are all gone out of the way: that he is universally sinful: this sowre leaven hath leavened the whole lump, every part of man, head, heart, hands, inside, outside, all are full of wounds, and bruises, and purifying sores, Isai. 1. 6. That man is a great sinner, Jer. 17. 9. The heart of man is desperately wicked; it is become like those bad figs which Jeremiah speaks of, those that were good were very good: and those that were bad were very bad: Psal. 5. 9. Their inward part is very wickednes. 'Tis expressed in the abstract, not wicked, but wickednes, and in the plurall number, wickedneses: There is a complication of all sorts of wickednes: and sin is so rooted, and (as it were) incorporated into the hearts of men, as if their natures were even transubstantiated into a masse of corruption. Is all this but conceit? Gen. 6. 5. God

for that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually. (God saw) God's eye cannot be deceived : men may think they see what they see not, and may not see what is before their eyes : But can Gods eyes fail him ?

2. That sin is the greatest of evils : The Apostle to set forth the formidable appearance that sin had by the Law, expresses it thus: Rom. 7. 13. *That sin might appear to be sin* : He could finde out nothing more evil and odious to expresse it by, than it self. If he had said, that sin might appear to be a Snare, a Serpent, a Viper, a Devil, an Hell, that had been much, but yet not enough to set forth this evil of evils : Sin never is seen in its perfect odiousness, but when it shews its own naked face, and looks like it self : We can never know how great an evil sin is, till we know how good the Lord is, how precious Christ is, how precious the soul of man is, to all which sin is so contrary and destructive. Rom, 8. 7. it is said to be *enmity against God*: God hath no enemy in the world but sin, and those whom sin hath made him. Sin hath set all the earth against the God of glory. From this enmity which sin hath filled the hearts of men with, arise all their *rebellions* against his Word and Government; all their unwillingness and aversness from his ways, their weariness of his service, their frowardness, murmurings, impatriencies, frettings and insurrections of heart against his Dispensations, and Providence. The unruliness and stubbornesse of the wills of men, the distemper and disorders of their passions and affections,

affections, the vanity, vilenesse, and confusion of their thoughts, the defilement and deadnesse of their consciences, the ebullition of so many hellish lusts, setting mens hearts upon all mischief: Whence is all this, but from sin that dwells in them?

Sin hath made men very *Devils*, set upon all manner of mischief. *Devils against God*, hating, reproaching, blaspheming, cursing, fighting against God: There should quickly be no God, n or Heaven, nor Being left, if the wickednesse of mans heart had power answerable to its malice. *Devils against themselves*, set upon the destruction and damnation of their own souls; there needed not another Devil to tempt and devour them: if God should but let them alone, they would quickly make their destruction sure of themselves. *Devils one against another*: There is not one sinner, but if God should pull up the fluces, and let his wickednesse have its full course, would do his utmost to damn all the world, enemies, frsends, husbands, wives, children, all should be destroyed.

And can there now be a greater evil then this imagined? I, you will say, if all this be true it is a great evil indeed: But may be for all these great words there may be no such great matter in it: Why, do but consider what sin hath done, and can not be denied, and then you will see reason to believe all that hath been said: Go to Mount *Calvary*, and see what it hath done there: What was it that slew the Lord of glory, that put Christ to death? Was it not those sins that were laid upon him? These were his *betrayers and murtherers*.

These

These were the thorns: the nails, the spear that wounded him, the gall and vinegar that was given him to drink: Let the sweat, the cryes, the groans, the blood, the soul that were pressed and poured out by sin, let these speak if too much hath been said.

Turn aside from *Mount Calvary*, and go down to the *Valley of Hinnom*, lay your ear to the mouth of *Topher*, and hearken what work sin hath done there: What is it that hath filled Hell so ful already, that hath sent down *Cain* and *Judas*, *Ananias* and *Saphira*, with those millions of damned souls that are already tormented in those flames? Did God damn so many souls for nothing, or for a trifle, inflict so great a torment for a small offence? What is it that hath cast them in thither? Was it their Righteousnesse? Was it not their iniquities? If you could step down into those chambers of Death, and ask those wretched creatures, Friends, *How came you in hither?* What would they answer? *Oh, it is our sins that brought us into this place of torment:* Oh! it was my Covetousnesse brought me hither, would one say: Oh! it was my lying brought me hither, sayes another: Oh! it was my Pride, or my Passion, or my Wantonnes, or my Slothfulness, that brought me hither, sayes a third: Oh sin, sin! this is it for which we burn, we roar, we rave, we die, we die eternally. Can there be too much said of the evil of Sin, that hath done all this mischief?

3. *Spiritual sins are the greatest of sins: Sordid pollutions are the most foul pollutions.*

By

By how much the more excellent the soul is above the body in its nature, by so much the more vile and mischievous, being depraved with sin! The soul of man is the *prime subject of the Image of God* in man; there was much of God to be seen in the body, or externals of man, but the face of God, the glory of God was stamped upon his soul; the soul being corrupted, it *became the express image of the Devil*: Satan is rudely limb'd, and some darker shadows of him, drawn on the outward man, but he is drawn out to the life in the soul; the very face, the heart of Satan, his pride, malice, envy, falsehood is engraven on the heart: a proud heart hath more of the devil than a proud look: a wanton heart is more vile than a wanton eye: a murtherous or adulterous heart is worse than a murtherous or adulterous act. It is true, when sin is committed without, it is worse than when it sleepeth in its causes within: and sin in its birth is worse than in its bare conception, and the reason is, because when sin is committed, there are both parts, the outward & the spiritual together: there is the sin of the hand, and the sin of the heart too, to make up the murther: But then, if you shoulld distinctly consider, that which the heart hath done towards the murther, & that which the hand hath done, the hearts part would appear to be incomparably the worst. The sins of the heart are *the root sins*, the springs that set all the wheels a going, the fountain that sets all the streams a running, the fire that sets the furnace a smoaking. Carnal men make little of outward sins, nothing of spiritual. If they would not be Extortioners, or Oppressors, or Swearers, or Cursers, some of them

them, yet evil thoughts may lodge in them; Lust may bear the rule in them, Pride, Envy, Ignorance, Atheism, Heart-blasphemy, these are scarcely accounted evils; What are Thoughts a little inward discontent, anger, and the like, that we should trouble our selves with these? Oh! You do not know what there may be in a Thought, or a secret Lust; there may be a thousand evil words, and actions, in the bowels of a few evil Thoughts; Lusts are big-belly'd; a world of monstrous births are continually springing forth from them: Beloved, if you should examine all the wickednesses of your lives, Drunkenness, Whoredomes, Lying, Oaths, Perjuries, and ask them one by one, Drunkenness, whence art thou? Adultery, whence comest thou? Oaths, Curses, Lyes, whence are all ye? Would they not all answer with the Apostle, *Come we not hence, even from those Lusts that war in your members?* Blame not Christians, that they are so much afraid of their own hearts; that they take so much pains, spend so much time about purging, and washing, and watching these, keeping their thoughts, governing their passions, mortifying their lusts; if you do not, they know what there is within them: He that makes nothing of an evil thought, the Devil is like to bring him to something in a little time.

4. *Sin is the root of all misery;* the miseries of this life, of all the diseases, pains, torments, tumults, commotions, quarrellings, contentions, murders, rapines, oppressions, wars, famine, poverty, pestilence, and all sorts of calamities that

this world groans under, Jer. 2. 17. *Hast thou not procured all these things to thyself, that is, by thine iniquities?* What a world had this world been had it not been for sin? A paradise, all the earth had been as the garden of the Lord. How great peace had there been, had it not been for this *make bate*; How great joy, had it not been for this *Tormentor*; How great beauty, and order, had it not been for this, which is the *deformity* and confusion of all things! What a world is this become by sin: how full of violence! What Lions, Tygers, Wolves, are the Inhabitants thereof become one to another! What thorns and bryars are they, scratching and tearing one another! What lying, and slandering, and defaming, and defrauding, and quarrellings, and fightings, are there broken forth; This earth is even almost become an Hell! Whence is all this? the Apostle tells us, James 4. 1. *From whence come wars, and fighting among you; come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members?* Sinners lay the blame of all, upon righteousness, and holiness, and the knowledge of God and Conscience, and on such persons as exercise themselves in keeping a good Conscience, and walking holily, and working righteousness. These are the troublers, these are the disturbers, these are the fire-brands, that set all in a combustion, though they little think what it is that herein they say, To impute the troubles of the earth to righteousness, and holiness, &c. To affirm, as many do, it had been a better world, if it had not been for so much preaching, and praying, and professing, and keeping

keeping such a-do about Conscience, and the like, is all one as to say, It had been a better world if God had not been in fault; we may thank God and his *Law*; we may thank *Christ and his Gospel* for all our troubles. But let such blasphemers know that 'tis themselves and their wicked hearts, their Atheism, and Ignorance, their Idolatries and Adulteries, their Pride and their Covetousness, their Lewdness and Licentiousness, that they owe all their troubles and miseries to, Lament. 1. *Jerusalem hath sinned, therefore is she removed; her adversaries are the chief; her enemies prosper, her filthiness is yet in her skirts,* Job 8. 11. *Can a rush grow without mire?*

Now from all this it evidently follows,

1. That no sin can properly be called little.
2. That the Saints mourning for sin, praying, watching, fearing, shunning sin, with its occasions, temptations, and very appearances, are not phanatical, but reasonable services.

Notwithstanding, all this evil that is in sin, this it is which carnal men make matter of nothing; 'T is every man's case, we are all sinners, and why should we trouble our selves at that which we cannot help; and what a wonder do they make at the poor Saints, that they are so fearful, and so watchful, and so tender, and so much troubled when they fall into sin, counting their fear their folly, and their mourning madness, as if it were a mere Scare-crow, or a bug-bear, or as if it were nothing but their own melancholick fancies, that they thus trouble themselves about? What is it that you are afraid of? why can you not be so free, and take your

herty as well as others? What hurt is there in a little mirth, in a little freedome, to live as other men do? Oh sinners, if *Samuels* mantle were taken off from this Devils back, and the vail were taken off from your eyes; if you did but see sin as it is, you would cease your wondering.

Is sin nothing? Is enmity against God his Government, his Being, nothing? Are the fruits of sin nothing? Is poverty nothing? Is sword, and famine, and pestilence nothing? Are all the bodily diseases that come upon you, & the torment of them: Is the Gout, and the Stone, and the Strangury, & the pains of Child-bearing nothing? Are Death, and Hell, and the vengeance of Eternal Fire, such slight matters? Is the fruit so bitter and deadly, and do you think there is so little hurt in the root? You may as well count these torments, which sin hath brought upon the world, to be conceits, or slight matters, as have such thoughts of sin.

Whosoever makes nothing of sin, makes light of Christ; whoever fears not, feels not, flies not, mourns not for sin as the most dreadful of evils, regards not God nor his own soul. He that hath so much wit as to dispute sin into a trifle, hath yet but little understanding, and less Religion; He that conceits that a cold (*God forgive me*) will make him whole of his inward diseases, or a slight (*I cry God mercy*) will make amends for his actual wickedness, if he prove not himself a Phanatick in the end, let the most circumspect Christians pass for Phanaticks now.

Sinners, If you will yet be convinced; if the Scriptures do not convince you; if your eyes and

ears do not teach you to understand sin better; take heed, lest God teach you hereafter, as Gideon caught the men of Succoth, with bryars & thorns, with fire and brimstone, and fetch his proof from your bones, and from your bowels, and cause the revenging worm, where your pangs shall come upon you, to bring back the memory of your slighted sins upon you thus: Now sinner, now wretch, what thinkest of thy lust now; of thy pride, and thy folly, and thy covetousness now? Where are thy right thoughts of all this now? Where's thy vain confidence now, that thou shouldest go out with all this well enough; that thou shouldest escape well enough, that all the threatenings and woes denounced against thee, would come to nothing? Now sinner learn, and be learning this lesson for ever, what a fool thou hast been in the midst of all thy high conceit and boastings of thy wisdom.

3. The Doctrine of Redemption is a real Truth: Need I prove this? That Christ is true; the true Messiah, true God and true Man; had a true Body, and a true Soul; That his sayings were true; He was a true Prophet; That his sufferings were true; He was a true Priest; That as he was truly dead, so he as truly rose, ascended and is the Lord, both of the dead and of the living, and is a true King; That he hath truly and fully accomplished his whole undertaking. Am I speaking to Jews or Pagans, that I need prove this? Am I not speaking to Christians, who must prove themselves liars, their profession a lye, and their Faith vain, if they deny these things? But wherefore was all this? What came Christ into the world for? Wherefore was he

born; whetbefore did he live, dye, rise, ascend? what was the intent of all this? Why, it was, to make a total and a bleffed change upon the miserable condition, of whomsoever of this sinful world shall imbrace and give entertainment to him; 'twas to make this old world new, this crooked world strait, this miserable world bleſſed, 'Twash to bring deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, Isa. 61. 1. To make an end of sin, to finiſh transgression, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, Dan. 9. 24. 'Twash to undo all that mischief, which sin and the Devil hath wrought, and brought upon this world, 1 John 3. 8. For this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 'Twash to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light, 'Twash to redeem from all iniquity, and to purifie to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14. 'Twash, that being delivered from our enemies, we might serve him wi. bout fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives, Luke 1. 74, 75. That they who live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again, 2 Cor. 5. 15. Hereupon says the Apostle, Tit. 2. 11, 12. The grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth us, that denying all ungodliness & worldly lusts, we should live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world. And lastly to redeem us, 1 Pet. 1. 4. To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for us. 1. To an inheritance. Christians are not brought out of Egypt, and redeemed from their house of bondage, and then

then left to shift for themselves, or to perish in the wilderness ; they are redeemed to an *Inheritance*, they are a *purchased people*, and there is for them a *purchased possession* 2. An *incorruptible and undefiled Inheritance*, an enduring possession, and an *holy Habitation*. Holiness is a great part of the blessedness of the Saints. Sinners, you that despise Holiness, despise one of the richest jewels in the Crown of Glory. 3. *Reserved in Heaven* ; there's the good land, where their inheritance lies ; that's the Country which Christ hath purchased for his ransomed ones ; *The whole Land is theirs, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

This is that Redemption which by the Gospel is preached unto you ; and if Christ had fail'd of performing and accomplishing of any of all this, he had been but an incompleat and imperfect Redeemer.

By the way, learn what great reason there is, that the Gospel should have better entertainment, than for the most part it meets with in the world ; one would think, who considers what entertainment it hath, and the Ministry of it, that it were some dismal word, and a dreadful errand that it came upon : If Christ had come to destroy the world, could he have had less welcome ? If the Gospel were as the Law, not only a *dead, but a killing Letter*, a *ministration of Death and Condemnation* ; If the Ministers of the Gospel, had been *Messengers sent up from the bottomless Pit, to deceive the Nations, to destroy Souls, to drag them down to everlasting Darkness*, there could hardly

haye been a greater hate and out-cry, than there is against it and them. Surely such a message, and such messengers, deserve better welcome, and better usage.

But to our purpose; You have heard what that Redemption is, which the Gospel brings us: Now doth Christ do his work by halves? Deliver out of Prison, and leave his ransomed Ones in their vile Prison-Garments; change their Relations, and never change their Conditions, redeem them from death, and not redeem them from Iniquity? Was this the intent of Christ in dying for Sinners, that they might play the beasts, and the Rebels more securely? Did this Grace abound, that sin might super-abound? Doth the Law of Faith, make void the Law of Righteousness; doth it not establish it? What's the import of those several expressions fore-mentioned; *That he might redeem from all iniquity, and purifie a peculiar people zealous of good works, that we might serve him without fear, in Holiness, and Righteousness; that they that live, should not live to themselves, but to him that died for them, that denying all ungodliness, &c.* Is not all this included in the Redemption which Christ hath wrought? And what doth all this import other, than that godliness we are pleading for? Is this a part of that which Christ hath redeemed us to, and is there nothing in it? Hath Christ swear, and groaned, and laboured, and travell'd in pain, and all this to bring forth a lye? Hath he died to purge, and purifie, and wash, and cleanse his people, and when all comes to all, is

is this nothing but a cheat? Did Christ die but in conceit, and rise and ascend but in conceit? As certain as it is that Christ did not barely personate a Redeemer, so certain it is, that his Redeemed do not barely personate Saints. Let all the world be Judges, what honour those persons have for Christ, that have no better opinion of the Fruits of his Death. Hence it appears.

1. That the Redemption of a sinner is the destruction of sin; Christ died to save men *from* their sins, not *in* them, to redeem from iniquity all as well as from wrath.

2. That Redemption and Regeneration are linked together. He that is bought from being a slave, is born a son; he that is not partaker of the renewing of the holy Ghost, is not partaker of the Redemption of Christ.

The Doctrine of Redemption by Christ is abused by wilful sinners, and made to serve as their great plea against the necessity of Holiness: Convince them of sin, of the necessity of turning, of the danger of continuing, and going on, here they presently take sanctuary, *Christ died for sinners*; and here they think themselves sufficiently secured, not only against all the threatenings of wrath, but against all exhortations to Holiness: Argue with them from the Command of God, *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification: Cast away your transgressions, why will you die? Turn and live*: From the Threatnings of God, *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, &c.* Yet this they think will answer all your Arguments, Christ died for sinners: I put my

my trust in Christ, that I shall be saved. What, trust in Christ and not turn to Christ! Hope to be saved by Christ, and refuse to be sanctified? Will Christ redeem those from the curse, who will not be redeemed from iniquity? *Jer. 7. 9.* *Will ye steal, and murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, &c. And come and stand before me in my House, and say we are delivered to do all these abominations?* Will you do wickedly, walk in all manner of wantonnesse, lasciviousnesse, lust, excesses, &c. and then come and take hold of a Redeemer, as if you were delivered to do all this wickednesse: *Is my House become a den of Robbers?* Are the redeemed of the Lord a-generation of Rebels, enemies of all Righteousnesse, Liars, Proud, Covetous, Blasphemers: Are these the followers of the Lamb? 'Tis true, the Apostle sayes, *Such were some of you, 1 Cor. 6. 18.* Yet he adds, *But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Christianity without Godlinesse, this is a fancy indeed: Let every one that nameth the Lord Jesus depart from iniquity, either turn from iniquity, or talk no more of Christ: a Christian and an Infidel are not more opposites, than a Christian and a Libertine: Take heed Sinners, and let not the Gospel undoe you, let not Mercy damn you; put not your Faith to do the sad office of infidelity. Beloved, let it never be said while the Just live, you must die by your Faith; this is like to be your case, you would never have dared so to have slighted holiness, and persisted in sin, had it not been for your trust in Christ.

You

You must count Christ to be no Christ, no Redeemer, or but a half, or decatful Redeemer, if you count your selfe good Christians while you are yet in your sinnes. You must have another Christ, another Gospel, ere ever you can be saved in your sinful state, *Romans 8. 1.* There is no condemnation to them ~~which~~ are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: This is Gospel, wherein you have the Redemeers Charter, and the Redemeers Character: His Charter, He shall not come into condemnation: His Character, He walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; that is, He is a man of a godly life. When doth the Gospel secure from condemnation? Why, those that are in Christ. But who are they? Why, only those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: those that walk otherwise can have no benefit by the Gospel. You all stand as convicted malefactors guilty of death: You have sinned, and what have ~~you~~ to say, why you should not die, and have your sentence of condemnation past upon you? May be you will call for a *Psalm of mercy, my Book, Lord, my Book,* the Gospel will, I hope, secure me. No Sinner, thou canst not have it, thou art one that livest after the flesh, and canst not have the benefit of the Gospel. This is the Law, and the Gospel sayes not one word to reverse it; If ye live after the flesh ye shall die: Christ never intended the benefit of his Redemption to any of you; whether you would repent or no, be holy or no: you may as well write this for Gospel, *He that believeth shall be damned, as this, He that obeyeth*

not the Gospel, shall be saved : And you may as well say, that sinning is serving of Christ, as that those that live after the flesh, obey the Gospel.

4. The Doctrine of Regeneration is a real Truth : There are three things most evident concerning this :

1. That there is such a change, and that necessary to Salvation.
2. That this is a great and mighty change.
3. That this is an Inward and Soul change.

1. That there is such a Grace as Regeneration, and that necessary to Salvation : *1 John 3.3.* Verily, verily, or truly, truly, or certainly, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdoms of God.

2. That the change that is wrought by Regeneration is a great and a mighty change; it is as great as he making something of nothing : Regeneration is a *new Creation*; It is as great as the raising up of persons from Death to Life. Regeneration is a *Resurrection*: *You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, Ephes. 2. 1.* There is as great a power, as much of Divinity, manifested in quickning a dead Soul, as in raising a dead Body. When God would confirm the Faith of the Jews, concerning their Conversion, and Restauration, after their cutting off, which the Apostle tells us shall be as *life from the dead*; He evidences that he was

was able to accomplish it by his making dry bones to live : *Ezek. 37. 3. Can these bones live? Son of man, prophesie unto these bones, say unto them, Oh ye dry bones hear the Word of the Lord :* 'Twas a strange Service the Prophet was put upon, but yet he prophesies; and behold there was a great shaking, and bone came to his bone, and they were covered with sinews, and with flesh, and the breath of life was breathed into them, and they stood upon their feet a great Army : *These bones, saith the Lord, are the House of Israel and Judah.* That is, as they lay in their state of rejection from God; and if the Lord could not have made these bones to live, he had failed of his confirmation of their Faith, touching the Restauration of this dead People.

When the Ministers of the Gospel are sent forth to preach to sinners, it is even as likely a service, as if they had been sent among the Tombes, and the Graves, to prophesie to the Skulls, and the Bones, and the Dust of the Dead: And if there were not a divine and almighty Power accompanying their Ministry, their succeſſe would be the ſame, as if they had been preaching the Beasts of the field into Men, or of Stones attempting to raise up Children unto *Abraham.*

3. It is an inward Soul-change ; Regeneration is the uniting of dead Souls to Christ, *Gal. 4. 19. My little Children, of whom I travail in birth, until Christ be formed in you :* Here note three things.

1. That the result of this union with Christ is a new Life, *1 John 5. 12. He that hath the*

Son

Son hath Life, *Generatio unius est corruptio alterius.*

In this Generation there is a Death and a Life.

1. *A Death*; Colos. 3. 3. *Ye are dead*, that is, Your sins are dead, your old man is dead; *Our old man is crucified with him*; Rom. 6.

2. *A Life*: There is new sense and motion, there is a living power communicated to souls united to Christ, whereby they are enabled to move and act in such an holy, spiritual and heavenly way, as was impossible before: Grace is a living thing, that spirits, and animates all the Faculties anew that puts life into all the duties and performances of the Saints; which though for the matter of them they might have been done before, yet they were but the dead carcases of duties rather than the things themselves.

2. This new Life is a *new Nature*, the Saints participation of the Nature of Christ, a change of the qualities of the soul: They are *new Creatures* that have passed the *new Birth*: The second *Adam* as well as the *First* brings forth his Children in his own likeness: The *divine Birth* is the bringing forth of the *divine Nature*: 2 Pet. 1. 4. As they said vainly, *The Gods are come down in the likeness of men*; it may be here said truly, Men are raised up in the likeness of God, renewed after his Image, made partakers of his Holiness: Those that put any thing lesse in his charge than the new creature, make Regeneration to be as very a contradiction as the Popish Tran-

Transubstantiation. Bread is made a God, and yet is bread still; a brute is made a Saint, and yet remains a brute still. A God under the accidents of bread, and a Saint under the qualities of a swine.

3. This new Nature is a glorious Nature, comprehending in it that divine light, whereby the Saints are enabled to understand and look into the depths of Eternity, the invisible things of God, the mysteries of the glorious Gospel, that divine Love, and Faith, and Hope, and the whole train of glorious Graces, together with those *Principles of Righteousnesse*, Truth, Mercy, Charity, &c. whereby they are made capable of injoying fellowship and communion with God, of bearing his Name, shewing forth his Vertues and Praises before the world, and doing his will: In summe, it is the Image of God, the Epistle of Christ, written upon the Tables of their hearts; And thus much those scriptural Expressions, *New Creatures, partakers of the Divine Nature, partakers of his Holiness, Children of Light*, with the like, do signifie and import.

What a strange piece of Vanity should we make of the Scriptures, if all these high and various Expressions should signifie no more than that empty and pitiful thing that carnal men do count their Religion, or Godlinesse. That ever that Ignorant, Sottish, Formal, brutish Generation, which have no more of the Knowledge of God than an Heathen, no more of the Life of God than a Stock, no more of Religion than to say over a Prayer by rote; f

far from being partakers of the new Nature, that they know not whether there be any such thing, or what it is : That ever such a blind, senselesse multitude should be imagined to be the persons whom the Scripture means, by *new Creatures, the Children of God, the Children of Light, the Images of God* : Much more that those who live after the flesh, who are proud, covetous, sensual, filthy, beastly in their conversations, yet if they have been baptiz'd, and passed under that sacramental Regeneration, and do but say now & then, *I repent*, or *God forgive me*, that these also are the children of God, and have all that new Birth which is necessary to their seeing the Kingdome of God, Who can with any colour of reason imagine ? Such as can make themselves believe this, have made such a forfeiture of their understandings, that they may be like in time to believe, that *the Devil is God, and that Hell is Heaven* ; and may even take up the Alcoran for their Bible, and let the Scriptures go for a Fable.

Sinners, consider with your selves, is there any such thing as the New Birth ? Can there be a New Birth without a New Life ? Doth Christ bring forth *dead Children*, or do dry bones live ? Doth the Gospel bring forth *monstrous births*, Children without eyes without an head, without an heart, or with the heart of a beast under the face of a man ? Doth it bring forth Serpents, Vipers, Dogs, Swine for its Children, and must the Kingdom of heaven be peopled with such Inhabitants as these ? If these be the Children of the Kingdome, where or who are the Children of this World ? Are the *Nathaniels, the Israelites* indeed, in whom there

is no guile: Are these the true Seed, and the Saints spurious? are these the Sons, and the Saints bastards?

Or if you will let these vile ones of the Earth go, as none of the seed; take the best of carnal men, that have the fairest face of Religion, and form of Holiness, without the inside, the new nature; are these they? Is the shadow, the substance, and the substance but a shadow? To say that the inward life of godliness, the spirit and soul of Christianity, is but a conceit, and this outside is all, this is Christianity, is as good reason as to affirm, that a Picture is a Man, and that a living Man is but a Picture; and as good Divinity, as I my self heard Preacht at *Oxford* about thirty years since, by a zealous Advocate, for the lawfulness of sports on the Lords day; who Preaching about the observation of the Sabbath, and distinguishing betwixt the Substantial, & the Circumstantial duties of that day, said, That *Preaching is a Religious Ceremony, Praying is a Religious Ceremony, but bowing at the name of Jesus, standing at the Creed and Gospel, holy and Religious Feasting, holy and Religious Dancing; these are the Substantials.* Hence it follows,

1. That Regeneration is not a *Supposition* change, or the counterfeit of a change: there is some difference hereby put, betwixt persons and persons; the Regenerate, and the Unregenerate, are not one and the same, no more than the living and the dead.

2. It is not a bare *Relative* change; as Justification & Adoption are held to be; there is a change of nature wrought by it, and not barely of Relation.

3. It is not a *superficial* change, or merely outward, that goes only skin deep; it is not, as 'tis said concerning Baptism, only the *washing away of the filth of the flesh*, the cleansing of the outside, and leaving lust to reign within: Regeneration is the change of the man, and not barely of the manners.

4. In this change we may read all godliness; we may read the use of things very much in their beings; we may know wherefore they are much the better, if we understand what they are; God's expectations may be read in his operations; we may understand much of our work, by observing God's work upon us: As God in making men *living Souls*, does thereby tell us, he expects other things from them, than from dead *stocks and stones*; and in making them *reasonable souls*, intimates, that he expects they should live other lives than *Dogs or Swine*; so in making them *Christians*, making them partakers of the Divine Nature, he makes it evident, that he expects they should live another life than other men.

The new life, or life of Godliness, may be read in our new Birth, or new Natures: The Regenerate are said, Ephes. 2.10. *To be created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, which God had before ordained that they should walk in them: *Created unto good works*, that notes two things,

1. Intended to good works,
2. Fitted to good works.

1. That in their new making, they were intended to good works; this was God's mind and

and meaning; he fore-ordained that they should walk in them: He did not set up such a light in man, to be put under a bushel; he bestowed not such a talent on man, to be bound up in a Napkin.

2. That in their new making, they were fitted to good works, *created to good works*, that is, they were brought forth in such an holy nature, indued with such a Divine light, such holy principles, powers, affections, dispositions, and inclinations, as fitted them for an holy active life; And this Divine, and excellent structure of this new creature, doth both signifie, what life it is intended to; and that this life, to which it is intended, is indeed an excellent life. There is something sure in this godly life; God did not new make men for nothing; and something of worth, and real excellency, or else he would not have been at such cost in preparing men for it; If there were no other godly life, than that which the carnal world count godlinesse, there needed no new Creation to fit men for it; What is there in the whole frame of the Religion of the vulgar, but a carnal man may reach to? For the devotional part of it, *saying, or hearing of a prayer, observing of days, rites, and custome, &c.* What great difficulty is there in that? *may not even a publican do the same?* yea, may not a Harlot, a Drunkard, an Idiot, do the same? Such Devotions will neither disturb their lusts, nor yet will their lusts distaste or disable to such Devotions; And for the righteousness of it, *to love those that love them, to be good Neighbours, to be no extortioneers, no Adulterers, &c.*

there is not so very much in that, *do not even the Pharisees do the same? What do you more than others?* said Christ to his Disciples. What singular or excellent thing do you? God hath done singularly well by you; you are fearfully & wonderfully made, (as 'tis true of the natural) so much more of your new Birth) and curiously wrought, not in the lower parts of the Earth, but in the highest Heavens; you are born from above, God hath done more for you than for others; What do you more than others? Some it may be, would have answered, What do you more than others? Why, there's no more to be done, all that's done more than others do, is mere fancy or conceit: But beloved, when you look upon that sapless, lifeless empty way of Religion, which others are content with, methinks your reasons should demand, What hath God new-made me, made me partaker of the Divine Nature, of the Life of God, for no more but this? Hath God given such a glorious Gospel, raised up such a mighty Saviour, who hath shed such precious blood sent forth such a glorious Spirit, given Commission to such multitudes of heavenly Ambassadors, to preach, persuade, beseech, exhort to travel in birth with me, till Christ hath been formed in me, and all this to bring me to no better a life than this? Surely there is something farther, that the Lord hath been at all this cost, and built this structure for.

Study this new Birth, study the new Creation more thoroughly, and if you see not the most holy, heavenly, spiritual conversation, that is pleaded for, radically and seminally in the bowels

bowels of it, then let godliness pass for a fancy for ever. Let the Regenerate but live according to their new Nature, and if that be not the very godly life we contend with you about, then call us what you will.

5. Faith is no fancy, Heb. 11. 1. *Faith is the ground, or the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* It hath a sure foundation on which its bottom'd, that sure word of promise, 2 Pet. 1. 19. *To the which (saith the Apostle) ye do well, that ye take heed.* There is a believing on Christ for Salvation, and a believing that we shall be saved by Christ, the former is called the *direct act of Faith*, and is the Souls accepting of Christ for Lord and Saviour, and an adventuring, and resting upon him for life, this is founded on the Rock of Ages, on the veracity, and faithfulness of that God that cannot lye, who hath said, John 3. 16. *He that believeth on his Son, shall not perish, but have ever-lasting life.* The latter, in the Saints, is called, *The Reflex act of faith*, and hath it's foundation, partly on the Word of God without them, partly on the Work of God within them: And this Faith, or rather this Act of Faith, if the former hath been first put forth, is such also, as will never deceive. As those that trust in God, because they have the Word and Oath of God, in which two immutable things, it is impossible for God to lye, shall not be confounded, but have strong consolation: So those that believe they shall be saved, because they find their hearts purified; who believe that their names are written in Heaven, because they find the Law and Image

of God, written and engraven on their hearts, who believe that they shall not come into condemnation, because they are in Christ, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; who believe they shall overcome death, because they have overcome the world; that they shall reap in mercy, because they have sown in righteousness; that they shall reap in joy, because they have sown in tears; that they shall receive the Inheritance of Sons, because they have received the Adoption of Sons; who finding themselves firmly knit and joyned to the Lord, are persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to seperate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord. Those, that on such grounds as these, believe they shall be saved, it shall certainly be unto them, according to their Faith. If it be thus with them indeed; if they be in Christ, if they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; if their hearts be purified, &c. The Word of the Lord stands good and sure to them, that they shall not come into condemnation; and they shall as infallibly be saved, as if their particular names had been written in the promise: The veracity of God, stands as firmly engaged to make good conditional promises, where the condition is fulfilled, as if the promise had been absolute.

There is a Faith which is a meer Fancy. The Faith of *Enthusiasts*, who believe upon unscriptural Revelation, who believe above and besides

sides what is written; The Faith of *Ignorants*, whose belief is (according to the *Athenians* Worship) on the *unknown God*: The Faith of *Idlers*, who believe they shall rest with Christ, though they never laboured with him: The Faith of the *Prophane*, who believe they shall be saved, though they be not sanctified; Such Faith is meer Fancie? Opinion or Presumption you may call it rather than Faith: You that are Ignorant, Idle, Prophane, and Unsanctified, and yet believe you shall be saved, you believe a Lie; you believe that which God hath never said shall be; nay, you believe that which God hath said shall never be, *Jer. 27. 11. They are a People of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not save them, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Such shall never inherit the Kingdom of God.* Hear Sinners, hear, God must be a Lyar, or your Faith a Lye.

But the Faith of God's Elect, such as hath been before described; this is that precious tried Faith; by which whosoever believes shall not be confounded. Christians, You that have obtained such precious Faith, a Christ-imbracing Faith, an heart-purifying, a flesh-mortifying, a world-conquering Faith, you may venture safely upon it; If ever this Faith deceive you, God hath deceived you, the Scriptures have deceived you, Christ hath deceived you, who hath prayed (and we may be bold to turn Christ's Prayer into a Promise) that this Faith fail not: Let the Phanatick world laugh, and mock, and call your consolations delusions, your confidence conceit, or what they will, let

them alone , you must give loosers leave to talk and laugh; yet, cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

6. The Doctrine concerning *Good Works*, is a certain truth. In this I shall shew ;

First, What we are to understand by *Good Works*; A good Work in general, is an Holy , or Gracious Action : To the making up whereof these *Four things* are necessary.

1. The Principle must be good from which it proceeds, it must be from an honest and upright heart, from a pure conscience, from Faith unfeigned, &c. *Matth. 12. 35. 1 Tim. 1. 5.*

2. The matter must be good; something that is commanded, *Micah 6.8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee? Isa. 29. 13. Their fear towards me, was taught by the precepts of men.*

3. The form or manner of doing must be good, it must be well done; this takes in the consideration of all its circumstances, of time, place, &c.

4. The end must be good , it must be done to the glory of God, *1 Cor. 10. 31.*

As to the particular kinds of *good works*, they are not easily to be reckon'd up : the *Papists* talk little of any *Good Works*, but the exercices of *bounty and liberality*, in giving Alms, feeding the Hungry, cloathing the Naked, visiting and relieving the Afflicted, building of Alms-house, Co ledges, and the like ; upon which they insist so much , as if there were scarce any other *Good Works*

Works but such as these : But we may not confine them within so narrow a compasse. Good Works do signify the same with a good Life, or a godly life; the doing and observing all things which God hath commanded us; Our living holily, honestly, circumspectly, fruitfully, imports the same with our doing good Works, the exercising of all the Graces of Christ, Faith, Love, Hope, &c. The subduing and mortifying of lust and corruption, the governing our hearts, the governing our tongues, the ordering of our carriages towards God, and towards men; All acts of Religion, Righteousnesse, Mercy, Charity, Praying, Fasting, Hearing, Sanctifying the Sabbath, Lending, Giving, Forgiving, Peace-making, Instructing, Exhorting, Reproving, Comforting, denying our selves, taking up our Crosse, following Christ, Fighting the good fight of Faith, Laying up Treasure in Heaven, and the like; these are good Works; Every thing is a good work, concerning which God will say at last, *Well done good and faithful Servant*: In all these the Lord requires;

1. That we act, *Ad extreum virium*, to our utmost, Eccles. 9. 10. *What thine hand findeth to do, and so what thy head, or thy heart findeth to do, do it with thy might*, Tit. 2. 14. *Zealous of good works*, Rom. 12. 14. *Not slothful in busynesse, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*, Col. 1. 10. *Fruitful in good works*, 1 Cor. 15. ult. *Abounding in the work of the Lord*.

2. That we act in these, *Ad extreum vita*;

To the end of our days, : *Deut. 6.2. Fear the Lord thy God, and keep all his Statutes, and his Commandments all the days of thy life.*

3. That we be doing, *Per totum vitæ cursum*, without intermission ; there must not only be well-doing, but a *continuance in well-doing*, *Rom. 3*: God will not have any Chasmes or vacuities in our lives, but every day must be filled up with the duties of it ; Christians must not think of getting to Heaven, *per saltum*, they must not leap, but walk ; they must not leap over a duty, nor leap over a day, *nulla dies, sine linea*. The Law of God doth not allow a day to sin, not abate us one days work. To demand a breathing time from the service of God, is to desire so much time for the service of sin. We are ever serving one Master, or the other ; we are certainly serving sin, when we are not, in one way or other, serving the Lord.

Secondly, That *Good Works* are necessary: Necessary to Salvation, so as though we are not like to be saved by our Works, yet we cannot be saved without them. He that works not, shall not eat bread in the Kingdom of God. The everlasting Rest is not for loyterers, but for labourers, *Mat. 7.21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* Faith cannot save us without Works : The Apostle tells us, *1 Cor. 2.26. Faith without Works is dead* ; and a dead Faith cannot bring us to Life. Therefore the Apostle *Paul* so vehemently charges, *Tit. 3.8. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they*

They which have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works, for these things are good and profitable to men. Where observe the Preface to the charge, *This is a faithful saying, that is, a true saying, and a great Truth, a worthy saying, worthy to be delivered, worthy to be received;* *And these things I will that thou affirm constantly, or teach constantly, or strenuously, or resolutely, be not beaten off from it.* Why, what is this great truth? Why, this is it, *That they which have believed in God, as ever they would that their Faith should stand them in any stead, must be careful to maintain good works: not only to do good works, but to do add, to maintain, or to exert and abound in good works; these things are good and profitable to men.*

Now let me demand of all the World, where lies the *Pharasicisme* in any of all this? Which of these Doctrines is it that is but a conceit? Is it this, that *Christians must not only be Believers, but must do good works?* Is it this, *That they must work with all their might, that they must be doing to the end of their dayes, that they must continue at their work without intermission* (that is) *that they must bestow none of their time on the Devil, but all on God?* Or is this the conceit, *That this well-doing is necessary to our well-being?* Let this be granted, that there is no fancy in all this, and I have at once dispatched my whole undertaking, and if I had no more to say, have sufficiently made it good to you, that strict godliness is no fancy. For this doctrine of good works, which I have laid before you, *this is Godlinesse, Godlinesse in the greatest severity and strictnesse of it;* grant a necessity of such

Such a life as this, and you grant all that is desired. And can any of this be denied? Must we serve the Lord? So be doing good is the same with serving God. Must we serve the Lord only, and wholly, may not sin claim a share, and now and then something to be done for the Devil? Must we serve the Lord with all our might, or may lesser serve? Consider that Scripture, *Luke 17. 10*, *When you have done all that you can, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done no more then is our duty to do.* When we have given unto God all that we owe him, then let the flesh and the Devil take the rest.

Beloved, consider what I have said, and observe, whether all that diligence, faithfulness, zeal, tenderness, and preciseness, which the strictest Christians either practice or profess, be not included in these three things, to serve the Lord with all our might, to the end of our dayes, and in a constant and continued course of Godliness.

Christians! now that you see how little weight or reason hitherto there appears in this charge of the world against us, let us be encouraged to hold fast, and hold on our holy course, let our practices be exact according to our principles, and let our principles alone to plead for themselves; God will plead for them against all the world: Let us not give occasion to evil men to charge us with looseness, and then we may give them leave to charge us with over-much strictness.

But oh, how much reason have we to blame our selves on the one hand, whilst they injuriously

ously blame us on the other : Too strict, too precise, too painful in the work of the Lord ? Oh, how sadly deficient rather are we ! How spare are our Duties, how little is our care, how uneven are our goings ! We need not fear any excess where we feel so many defects. Oh, how scanty are our services for our God, how barren are our fields, how thin do our good fruits spring up ? Sinners, charge us with our barrenness, and we will joyn with you in the charge : the Lord pardon us, it is but little that we have brought forth; our good fruits are but like the *gleanings of the Harvest*, here and there an ear, or a poor handful : or like the *gleanings of the Olive-tree*, Isa. 17. 6. *Two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches.* Blessed be God for any thing, but woe to us that there is no more ; it is but here a little and there a little, here a lire and there a blank, that we have to shew. Oh, how many Chasmes and Vacuities are there to be found in our course ? how many empty houres, and empty dayes, have we lived ? Concerning which, if we should have asked, *Anima quid fecisti hodie*, Soul, what account canst thou give of this dayes work ? Instead of giving in our *bill* we must give in a *blank*, and write down nothing but *Perdidis perdidis*, I have lost a day more. Oh Brethren, let us take heed of giving in any more such blank accounts, lest from our *Perdidis* we should at last come to write down, *Peris perit*, I am lost, I am undone, I have lost so much time, that now I am afraid I have lost my soul.

Beloved, whilst others bespatter our diligence,
let

Let us bewail our negligence, let us bewail it and amend. If to be strict and watchful, and fruitful, be to be vile, and foolish; let us resolve with that holy King, *We will be more vile than this*; we will be more foolish than this, if this be folly: whilst men charge us, that our Religion is fancy, we have no such way to vindicate it, and prove it a reality, but by being more religious, more strictly so, more fruitfully so: our fruitfulness in good works will be the proof of our sincerity, and will silence our adversaries calumnies.

Object. *But is there so much in this Doctrine of good works, and all necessary to salvation, who then can be saved? May not a good will serve to make up the defect of good works? We have heard, that God accepts the will for the deed, and we hope, that though we have done little, yet that this will be accepted, that we have a willing mind.*

Sol. Though this be a truth, and may administer comfort to Christians in many cases, that a *willing mind is accepted with God*, where there is little done: yet because it hath been by divers much mistaken and abused, and this mistake hath probably proved fatal to many a soul, being made use of to serve for an excuse of a *lazy heart and barren life*: give me leave before I proceed any farther, to turn aside a little, and make some stay upon the consideration hereof, and to shew you in what sense the will may be accepted where the work is not done.

There is a question put amongst the Schoolmen, whether a will to sin where the Act follows not, contract not as great a guilt in the sight of God, as both the will and the Act: and *Durandus* determines

determines it thus, The reason why the wil to sin brings not forth the A&T may be twofold, either *Propter incompletam & imperfectam voluntatem*, because the will is not so fully and peremptorily resolved and set upon it; or else *Propter impedimentum aliquod*, because though the will be fully resolved upon it, yet there is something that hinders the execution, as it may be, want of power, or opportunity to commit it: Now in the first case saies he, where the reason of the not acting of the sin, is the incompleatness of the will: there the will without the act is not as great a sin as the will and act together: but if the will were so fully resolved, that it would have brought forth the act, if it had not been hindred, there the guilt is as great, if the sin be not committed, as if it had been committed.

There may be use of this to the determining the present question: Where there is a will to perform a duty, and yet it is not done, if the reason of the failing be not from the incompleatness of the wil, but from some unavoidable hindrance, there the wil is accepted, as if the work had been done: where the will is so strongly set upon a duty, as that it would have brought forth the performance, had it not been for some invincible hindrance, it shall not fail of acceptance; the reason is, because where the defect is not in the wil God hath the heart, and wheresoever God hath the heart, there is certain acceptance with God: where the heart is engaged against any particular lust, & is resolved upon it, this lust I must mortifie, and through the help of God will seek its destruction, though it cannot yet compass it, yet this resolution

resolution evidences, that the heart is on Gods side ; it doth not side with lust against God, but sides with God against lust, and so in all other the like cases. 2 Cor. 8. 11. *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not : He that gives according to what he hath, he that does according to what he hath, and does it heartily, shall be accepted undoubtedly.* It may be thy case may be such sometimes, that *to will* may be *all thou hast* towards a Duty : as for instance, when thou hast a will to new mercy, to give an alms, if thou hast nothing to give, thy will is all thou hast. 'Tis true, there may be mistakes, & we are too apt to such mistakes, to impute our failings in duty to want of ability, when they are from want of will. How ordinarily do men thus excuse their grossest neglects, even when they yield themselves over to an universal careless and idle life, wherein there is not the least care or pains taken to please or follow God ? Why, *I do what I can, I can do no more than I can* ; I would live a better life, but I cannot, when yet the will is only in fault ; though you can do no more than you can, yet if you had a good will to it, you might do more then you do.

But still the great question will be, How may I know (in case of failings of performance) whether my will be so fully set upon my duty, that there would be performance, if it were not hindered, if it were not for want of power or opportunity ? I answer :

1. There is no pleading want of ability to excuse a total neglect of Godliness ; if the pretence be,

be, of want of ability to live a godly life in general, *I am willing to live a godly life, but cannot*, there tis certain the defect is in the will; the Spirit of Sanctification, is a *Spirit of Power*, and where the will is once savingly renewed by that mighty Spirit, there is certainly such a power communicated; as will infallibly bring on the soul to follow God in a course of godliness; whatever particular weaknesses and failings there may be, 2 Tim. 1. 7. *God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*, Jer. 42:20; 21. *Ye dissembled in your hearts, when you sent me to the Lord your God, saying, pray for us, and whatsoever the Lord our God shall speak, we will do it.* Here was a fair promise, what could be said more? *Whatever the Lord shall say, we will do;* and like enough they might have some intention to it; but says the Prophet, *Ye dissembled with me, all the while;* why, how does that appear? Why, in the next verse, says he, *I have this day declared it to you, but ye have not done any thing, for which the Lord your God sent me to you.* If your hearts had been right, there would have been something done, but you have done nothing.

Beloved, you that say you fain would follow God, but cannot; you would fain live a godly life, but do nothing towards it, you would willingly leave off your worldly life, or your fleshly life, or your idle life, you would fain leave off your drinking, and gaming, and wantonness, and betake your selves to praying, and repenting, and denying your selves, and minding your souls, and the things of Eternity, but you are

L not

not able, the meaning is this, you are not willing, you cannot find in your hearts, to take up such a course, you have some *velletier*, some *wifew*, and weak inclinations to Godliness, but no will to it; if there were a willing mind within, doubtless there would be some sign of it in your course without. 2. For particular Duties, when we are willing to them, and yet fall short of performance, we may know, that the evil would bring forth the acts, were it not for some great impediments. 1. When the non-performance of duty brings forth *sorrow and trouble of heart*; when it is a grief of mind to us that we cannot do what we would, Rom. 7.18, 19, 24. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not, the good that I would do, &c. Oh wretched man that I am who is bad deliver me from the body of this death.* That which hindred him was a sore burthen to him, under which he groans, and passionately wishes for his redemption and deliverance from it; those who in case of failings are quiet, and well enough contented, much more, those who are glad of an excuse, as too often 'tis to be observed in many, who when they are put upon difficult or displeasing Duties, are glad they have so much to say for themselves, that they are not able, or have not opportunity, 'tis an argument, that little would have been done, had they had never so great ability.

2. When if we cannot do the duty, *we do what we can towards it.* A man that's poor, and can't give an alms to his Brethren in distress, yet he can pity them, pray for them, make their case known

known to others that can relieve them ; if he do not what he can, if he do not open his bowels to them, though he cannot open his hand, though he had never so much, his poor Brother would be like to be little the better. The poor Widow, that cast in her Mite into the Treasury, which was all she had, 'twas a sign she had a large heart, though she gave so small a gift, 1 King. 8. 17. *David* had it in his heart to build an House for God, and yet did it not ; the Lord hindred him. How may it be known that *David* would indeed (if he might) have built it ? Why, by this it appeared, though he might not do it, yet he did what he might towards it ; though he might not build, yet he prepared materials for the building. If thou art but a Babe in Christ, hast had but a little time, hast yet but a little understanding, a little strength, though thou canst not follow the Lord in such exactness, nor attain to such a fruitful life, as those that are grown and experienced Christians have attained to, yet if whilst thou art *but a child*, thou dost follow the Lord *as a child*, according to the measure of thine understanding and ability, thou art yet unskillful, and performest thy duties in a broken manner, but yet thou dost perform them ; thou art *weak* as a child, but yet art *tractable* as a child, willing to be led where thou canst not go ; if it be thus with thee, thou needst not be discouraged, he that whilst he is but a child does follow God as a child, according to his measure, 'tis a sign, that if he were a man, he would follow him as a man.

If you labour under any lust, or violent passion,

front, which it may be flows from your natural complexion, or bodily constitution, which when ever it's moved and stirred, you are not able to stand before it; and notwithstanding, you know it is your duty to mortifie and crucifie it, yet still this is your case, that though it be matter of great grief to you, and as a continual thorn in your flesh, and it be the longing desire of your soul to have it destroyed, yet you can do little to it; in this case,

1. If your will to be rid of it, bring forth a continual watching and praying against it, if you cannot overcome it, yet you are still fighting against it, if it will live in you, yet you will not let it live in peace with you, especially if,

2. Your striving against it be not altogether without success, but brings forth some actual restraint of it, as to those outward acts by which it would vent it self, as if you can't overcome passion, yet you restrain in some measure your tongue from uttering it in any angry words; or if you cannot overcome your inward pride, yet you do forbear those self-exalting words, and vain boastings, &c. by which that lust is fomented; if your heart be so set against it, that it thus strives against the lust within, and does ordinarily restrain some of its outward actings, you may be sure, that if you could have your will, it should not be suffered to lodge one night more within you.

If you have a slothful heart, and are naturally, or by occasion of any bodily distemper, dull, heavy, and unactive, and are still wishing for a more active, lively spirit, but cannot attain it:

it; yet though your heart be heavy and sleep you will not let it sleep in quiet, but are infrequently jogging, and awakening it, by the most stirring and quickening considerations; if you endeavour to serve the Lord with the best you have, if what you want in quickness and sprightfulness, you labour to make up in seriousness, though you make on by a slow pace, yet you do go on; why, then know, that you have to do with a God, that knows and considers your frame, and in this case also will accept you, according to what you have, and not according to what you have not.

3. If there be some Duties that you are unable to, yet if you be faithful in others, that you can do; if you have not an alms to give to one that's poor, yet you can give counsel to him, and therein shew kindness to his soul; if you can't so well compose your thoughts to any fixed meditation, but are unavoidable perplexed with confusedness and distractions, yet you can praise, or you can spend the more time in reading; do you do that? If you cannot so profitable, or to so much spiritual advantage, improve Christian societies, do you do the more in private, in your more retired and immediate converse with God? If you want courage or boldness to appear for God, in exhorting or reproving others, especially such as are above you, yet you have families wherein you can be bold; what do you do there? to your children, to your servants? Do you instruct them, warn and reprove them, &c. though (as before) you can't extend mercy to others in their needs, having not wherewithal; yet are

you just, and righteous, and honest, and peaceable in your dealings with, and carriage towards all? If you are just, and would be merciful, if you had wherewithall; if you are profitable in your conversing with your families, and would be so to others; if you could get up to courage and boldness; if you are serious, and spiritual, and affectionate in secret, and have a will to be so in society, that's an Argument, that your will would bring forth performance there also, if it were not hindred.

4. If at such times, when there are not such impediments, we then do, what at another time we cannot; that which we cannot do at some times, as in sickness, or in times of desirous or temptation, may be done at another time, when we are not under such disadvantages.

Now gather up all these together, and then the question will easily be determined.

He that hath a will to walk in all the Duties of godliness; he that does ordinarily walk in the practice of those holy duties, which he hath power to do; he that doth what he can towards those duties, which he cannot fully reach to; he that mourns, and is grieved to his heart, under his failings; this man may have ground to conclude, that his spirit is sincerely willing, though his flesh be weak; and that this willing mind is accepted with God, as if it did really perform: But now, those that pretend to have a good will to godliness, but yet in their general course, are carnal and careless, and there's little or nothing of a godly life to be seen; those that do not what they can, that do not endeavour

to do what they cannot, that do not mourn unto their failings, but are contented and quiet, and satisfie themselves in this, that their will is good, and that God accepts their will for the deed; such as these do but deceiye themselves, and are not upright before God, nor accepted with him.

7. The Doctrine of the last Judgement, and the different rewards that shall then be rendred to these that are sincerely godly, and all others in the world, is no fancy, but a real Truth. I am dealing with *Pharisees*, not with *Sadduces*, and therefore shall not need to prove, either the Resurrection or Judgement: My main busines here, will lie in the proof of the latter part, *That the sincerely godly, shall have in the Judgement, a far different reward from all other men.*

That God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness; I hope you will give me leave to believe, that you are already satisfied in it: When all the men of this world shall have run their course; when the Courteous Gallants, & the Rustling Roysters, when the proud Misions, and wanton Mimicks, shall have acted their glorious parts; when the trampled, and contemned Christians, shall have all run their weary Race; when the last Scene shall be over, the Stage cleared, the Curtains drawn; when the Beggars Rags, and the great Mens Robes; when the Warriors Swords, and Statesmens Gowns shall be put off and laid aside, and the poor oppressed shall stand upon even ground with their mightiest Oppressors; when the Kings

of the Earth shall have laid down their Crowns, and the Princes their Scepters; when the Judges of the Earth shall have broken up their Courts, and their Tearn is ended; Then shall the God of Glory Erect his Tribunal; before which, all persons from the least to the greatest, must make their personal appearance; have all their wayes and actings examined, and considered over again, and receive their doom: *Then shall men return, and discern betwixt the righteous and the wicked; betwixt him that served the Lord, and him that served him not; Then shall men say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; (a peculiar reward) doubtlesse he is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*

If you ask, What shall this reward of the Righteous be? and what shall be the difference betwixt theirs, and the rewards of all others whatsoever? Let these following Scriptures be examined, and give in the Answer, Rom. 2. 6. 7, 8, 9. *Who will render to every man according to their deeds, to them, who by patient continuing in well-doing seek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life; but to them that are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousnesse, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.*

These words refer to the last judgment, as appears by the former part of them, *Who shall render, &c.* In the following part, we have the dividing of the Sheep from the Goats; which are both described, and have their distinct rewards appointed to them.

1. We have a description of the Sheep, and what their reward shall be; and by their description, these Sheep should be the very same with *Precisions*, or circumspected Christians:

1. They are such as seek for Glory, and Honor, and Immortality; that is, that seek for a portion of Glory and Immortality in the World to come: They leave the Kingdomes of this world to be shared among the men of this world, and seek for that Kingdom which cannot be shaken.

2. They are well-doers; good men, and holy men; men of a good and holy life.

3. They continue in well-doing; they are not good for a fit, but it is the way of their life.

4. They patiently continue: Patience is either,

1. Of Labour, they do not complain, nor are weary of their work, but buckle to it. Or,

2. Of sufferings; they can bear as well as do. Or,

3. Of delay; they are content to stay for their reward till hereafter; let others take their portions and their rewards here, they are content to stay for theirs till hereafter.

This is the description of the Sheep; and of all the men in the world, who should these Sheep be? Can they be any other than those godly men, that have been laid open to you? Well, but what is the Reward, which in the Judgment of the Lord will render to these? Why, it is eternal Life, eternal Glory and blessedness: to them that by patient continuance in well-doing, &c. be will render eternal Life. This is true, Sirs, this is no conceit, it is a certain truth, and such

such a truth as you your selves must believe, before ever you can come to good: Heb. 11.6. *He that cometh to God, must believe also God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that (diligently) seek him.* Mark it, of them that (diligently) seek him. They are the same men you see, that are spoken of here, and in the former Scripture: of these God is the rewarder, that is, with a special and plentious reward, that is necessary to be understood. God hath rewards for the ungodly: You that are proud, and persecutors, and despisers of God, and his ways, God will reward you all for all your doings, but he hath a blessed reward for those that seek him: And this saith the Text: *Every one that cometh to God must believe.* Sinners you will not be persuaded now, but these people are foolish self-deceiving people; and that the Heaven, the Joy, the Glory, and the Blessedness they feed themselves with the hope of, is only in their own fancies: but yet, if ever you come to any thing, if ever you be brought home to God, this is that which you (must) believe, That God is a Rewarder, and a glorious Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Thus we have the description of the Sheep, &c of their reward, and the certainty thereof; next we have the description of the Goats and their reward, of them there as a general description, *The men that do evil,* and this threefold particular description.

1. *They are contentious.*

2. *They obey not the Truth:* But,

3. *They obey unrighteousness:* which for methods sake I shall reduce to two Heads. They are described,

I. By

1. By their Contentions.

2. By their Conquests.

1. By their Contentions; There is a twofold contention.

1. Of man with man.

2. Of man with God.

This latter is express in Scripture, by ~~giving~~ saying, Rom. 10. by resisting, Acts 7. 51. *To stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost by kicking,* Deut. 32. 15. This kicking implies,

1. Opposition against God.

2. Opposition joyned with scorn and contempt, putting a slight upon God, & all his Counsels and wayes. Now this latter is the contention meant in the Text, contention against God; they will not hearken to his Voice, nor be obedient to his Truth! The Lord commands and calls them to accept of his Grace, and to be obedient to his Law, but they reject God, kick against his Word, and refuse to hearken to him.

2. By their Conquest or Victory in this contest; after all the strivings of God with them, they still stand it out and overcome; they obey not the truth, but persist to obey unrighteousness; where,

1. By the Truth we are to understand the whole Word of God, John 17. 17. *Thy Word is Truth,* both the word of Righteousness, the Law, and the word of Faith, the Gospel: by obeying the Truth we are to understand, submitting to the government of the Law, and accepting the grace of the Gospel.

2. By unrighteousnesse we are to understand, all

all those corrupt Principles, according to which the Lusts of men do govern them; which (I take) the Apostle means, *Rom. 7. 23.* by the *Law of Sin.* In that, and the former *Verse,* there is mention made of *Four Laws*, contending one against another, whereof *Two*, are on one side, and *Two* on the other, *The Law of God,* *The Law of the Mind,* *The Law of the Members,* and *The Law of Sin.* By the *Law of God* is understood, *The Word of God:* by the *Law of the Mind* is understood, in the Regenerate, *Grace;* in the Unregenerate, *the Light of the natural Conscience:* by the *Law of the Members* understand, *Lust or Concupiscence:* by the *Law of Sin,* those corrupt Principles, according to which Lust governs: As the *Law of the Mind* governs according to those holy Principles contained in the *Word,* so there are certain Principles of *Unrighteousness,* according to which the *Flesh* governs.

To enumerate and reckon up all these corrupt Principles, would be as great a task, as to reckon up all the Doctrines of Truth, and the righteous Commands of God, to each of which holy Doctrines and Commands, there are in this *Law of Sin*, principles directly contrary. Now because it may serve the Design I am now pursuing, viz. To help Sinners to understand themselves, I shall mention some of the chief of them, in number *Ten*; which, if you will, you may call, *The Devil's ten Commandments.*

1. *Live to thy self.* Mind thine own things: this is the first and great Commandment, on which all the rest hang, and to which they serve, and

and is the same as, *be thine own God, thine own Idol.*

2. *Let thy will be thy Law.* Thou art thine own, thy Tongue is thine own, thy Time is thine own, thy Estate is thine own, mayest thou not do what thou wilt with thine own?

3. *Make thy best of the time present, and of present things.* Lose not a certainty for uncertainties; who knows what shall be hereafter, *Eat and drink for to morrow thou diest;* be merry while thou mayest, spend while thou hast it, make Hay while the Sun shines, Death comes and there is an end of all thy mirth.

4. *Stand fast in the liberties of thy Flesh.* Come not into bondage, be not a voluntary slave to a strict and restrained life, when thou mayest, if thou wilt, use thine own liberty.

5. *Continue in sin, because Grace hath abounded.* Christ died for sinners, God is merciful, why shouldest thou then fear to take thy course?

6. *Do as others do.* Go along with the multitude, fashion thy self to the times, be not singular; Why shouldest thou think thy self wiser than others?

7. *Do no more in Religion than needs.* Be not Righteous over-much, be not over forward, a little Faith, a little Repentance will serve thy turn.

8. *Do not trouble thy self about small offences.* Thoughts are free, Words are but things of course; What man is there that lives and sins not? What shouldest thou keep such a-do about thy sins? Are they not but little ones?

9. *Be not over hasty.* If thou must repent, it is time

time enough yet, torment not thy self before thy time, repentance will be well enough at last: when thou art old thou wilt have little else to do; be not old whilst thou art young.

10. *Trust God with thy soul, rather than man with thy body.* That is, choose Iniquity rather than Affliction; venture no farther in matters of Religion than thou mayest with safety.

These are some of those corrupt Principles which make up the Law of Sin, to which all others may be reduced; and living under the power of any of these, or any others of the like nature, this is obeying Unrighteousness: As the Apostle layes, *He that breaks one of the Commandments of God is guilty of all:* So he that lives under the power of any one of the Commandments of the Devil, is, if not under the power of all, yet as sure a slave to the Devil as if he were guilty of all; he whose foot is entangled in one cord of the Net, is as fast, as he that hath the whole Net spread over him; if a bird be held but by a leg or wing, it is as sure as if the whole body werr in the Net. Here now you have also the description of the Goats; those that are contentious, resisting the Lord and the word of his Grace, and who ever all the striyngs of the Lord with them, do overcome, and hold their own, and persist in their disobeying the truth, and obeying unrighteousness, or living under the dominion of those corrupt principles, which make up the law of sin.

Let me here demand of you these *Three Things.*

First, *Are not these principles I have mentioned every one of them evidently principles of unrighteousness?*

odisnesse? And may they not as well be called the Devils Commandments, as the Devil be called a Devil?

Secondly, Are not all those that live under the power of these principles, the very members means in the Text, by those that obey it a right connesse may they not as well be called the Devils servants, as those wicked Laws the Devils Commandments.

Thirdly, Are not all persons that are not precisely godly, in the sense I have before described it, evidently held under some of these corrupt principles? Is not this it which you in reproach charge upon the Saints, that they will not live under these, or some of these Rules? That they will not take their liberty, that they will not do as others, but they must be singular forsooth, as if they were wiser than their neighbours, thus they stand upon every triffe and small matter, &c.

Some of these anti-Precisions, if they be laid to these black lines, do touch with them in every point throughout; you may well stile them, *Hells thorough Conformists, or the Devils best Subjects.*

Sinners, the whole generation of you that are of such a spirit, even every one of you that have a word to speak against the precisenesse of godliness and godly men come and look into this glass which is here set before you: Do you know your own faces when you see them? Are not these Principles the very Pictures and express Images of you? If you say they are not, it is because you do not know your own faces, if they are not, let me be rejected for a *Liar and a Slanderer*. But if you

you be, even all of you, these very men, then look a little further, and you may see your Reward will be in the Judgement : Why, what is it ? Read on and you have it ; *To them that obey not the Truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every Soul of man that doth evil.*

If you say, This is but your opinion, but for all that you may be mistaken, we hope to fare as well as you, the best of you, for all your great words : but our opinion ? Why, is it never your opinion too ? Do you never doubt ? Are you never afraid that this may be, that this will be your portion ? Did your own Consciences never preach to you the same things ? but whether they did or no, this is as true, that indignation and wrath will be the portion of every Soul of you thus living and thus dying, this is as true, as that God is righteous. The Righteousness of God is engaged, to render to every man according to his works ; and so to them that obey not the Truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, &c.

And by this time you may see, that there is some difference betwixt the rewards of the godly, and the rewards of all others in the world ; as much difference as betwixt life and death, mercy and wrath, everlasting joy and peace and everlasting anguish and tribulation ; if Heaven and Hell differ only in conceit, and if there be not as great difference betwixt the rewards of these and all others, as betwixt Heaven and Hell, then once more I tell you, we will be content to be the *Phanatics*. And have you not yet done with talking of

of our fancies and conceits? Is it but a conceit, that there shall be a Judgement? Or, is this a conceit, that it shall then fare better with the Sheep than with the Goats? Or, that those are Christ's Sheep, that hear his voice, and follow his steps, and keep by the Shepherds Tents? Is this a conceit, that it shall fare better with the Friends of Christ, than with his Enemies, or that those are the Friends of Christ, who are the Friends of Holiness? Is this a conceit, that it shall fare better with the servants of Christ, than with strangers? Or, are those the best servants, who wast their Talcous, or bind them up in a Napkin? Will Christ say in that day, *Away thou faithful servant, away from me ye workers of Righteousnesse?* You have loved me too much, you have pleased me too well, you have followed me too close, you have given your selves to too much praying, too much praising, too much fasting; you have been too conscientious, too tender, too watchful, too holy; you would not be merry, and idle, and vain; you would not go along with your neighbors, to their sporting; to their revellings, to their pleasures, but must needs deny your selves, and take up your crosses and follow me, you could not be content with an earthly happiness, but you must have glory, and honour, and immortality; you could not be content to venture on a groundlesse hope of glory, but you must needs make sure of it, by patient continuance in well-doing, *Away from me ye workers of Righteousness;* you that have followed me in the Regeneration, get ye gone, get you down to everlasting destruction; Will this be the

voice of the Judge at that day? Will he call to sinners, *Come ye mantons, come ye wine-bibbers, come ye swearers, liars, scoffers, whore-masters, come ye blessed crew, inherit the Kingdom?* All this must be so, if godliness be but a fancy; and do you not yet see sinners, what men of reason, what men of Judgment you are, & how much truth or weight, there is in your charge against the saints? Oh Christians, you see I hope sufficiently, how little ground you have to take the least notice of, or discouragement from these confident Adversaries, who in proclaiming you Phanaticks, must Proclaim themselves either *Infidels* or *Idols*. Thus I have shewed, that the Principles of Godliness are not *fanatical*.

2. The Duties and Comforts of Godliness are no fancies; I shall instance in such duties, and those parts of duties, which are most obnoxious to this censure; the most spiritual duties, the most spiritual parts of duties, which being most out of sight, and above the reach of the carnal world, are most of all thus censured by them; I shall mention only two, which indeed are comprehensive of all.

1. Worshipping God in the Spirit.
2. Walking in the Spirit,
1. Worshipping God in the Spirit. If this be a fancy, the Apostle *Paul*, with the Christians, his Contemporaries, were the great Phanaticks of their time; who sayes thus of himself and them, *Phil. 3. 3. We are the Circumcision, who worship God in the spirit. We are the Circumcision?* that is, we are the People of God, we are they who

who are circumcised with the circumcision which is without hands, circumcised in heart ; which is all one as if he had said, we are Christians, who worship God in the Spirit. Worshipping God in the Spirit, notes,

1. The worship of the Soul, or heart-worship.

2. The worshipping God through his Spirit, or in the Holy Ghost.

1. The worship of the soul, or inward worship, & that, 1. As it stands in opposition to mere bodily worship ; I say not as it is oppos'd to bodily worship, but to mere bodily worship. 2. As it stands in opposition to the antiquated Jewish worship, which was more external, pompous, and ceremonious. *We worship God in Spirit* ; that is, we worship God in the heart, and in the simplicity and plainness of Gospel worship.

Heart-worship is the true worship ; the worship of the soul is the soul of worship : The body without the soul is dead, and bodily worship without spiritual, is dead worship, John 4. 24. *God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit, and in truth* : The latter word, (*Truth*) is expositively of the former (*Spirit*) signifying, that worshipping in Spirit, is worshipping in Truth ; *This is true worship, worship indeed*. The worship of the body, the uncovering of the head, the bowing the knee, the lifting up of the hands, or voice, these are but the outside and carcase of worship, and so far only capable of being accounted worship, as they are helpful to, and expressive of, the devotion of the soul. As bowing of the knee signifies the bowing of

the heart, as the uncovering of the head, either expresses, or helps towards the inward reverence of the soul, so far are they worship, and no farther, and even then but improperly so called: But as they stand single and separated from the inward worship, they are no worship, no more then a carcass is a man, but are meer shadows and fancies. There's no such Phanatick as the Formalist; who whilst with those Heathens, *Mat. 6. 7.* *He thinks to be heard for his much speaking, doth but play the hypocrite and lyar :* Look what the Courtiers Complements are, such are the Formalists devotions, smooth words, tongue courtesies, flattering salutes, fawning cringes; *Your servant Sir, your servant, command me what you please, I am ready to serve you.* Here's a great shew of respect and kindness, but what is there in it? What wise man will regard it? And what more is there in the Formalists Devotions? what is it but meer complementing with the Holy God? Very devout, and lowly, as to all appearance, and a great noise is there, that such devotion makes, but what is there in it: What awe, and soul-reverence of God, what heart striving, and wrestling with God, what heart elevation, or lifting up the soul to God is there in all this? Is there no such thing as heart striving, and soul-reverence required in the worship of God; or are these but shadows of worship, and is the soul of it only in the lips, or knees? Doth he whose soul is poured out in prayer, whose spirit strives with the Lord; doth he but pray in conceit, worship God in conceit, and those whose eyes, and tongues, and hands only pray, have

have they gotten the substance, are these the true worshippers ? Beloved, be not deceived, God sees not as man sees; he sees what is within man; he sees what is within our duties ; they are not shewes or sounds that can blind his eye, or please his ear.

Ephel.5,19- Be ye filled with the spirit speaking to your selves in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord. Believe it Christians, Heart musick is the best Church-musick, heart-praying, and heart-singing, makes the best melody in the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. My work and intent is not, to decry all externall worship, as useleffe or unacceptable ; We must glorifie God in our bodies, as well as in our spirits ; Our lips must bear their parts in our prayers, and praises ; but I would note that you should take the body of worship to be the soul, and the soul to be nothing. Be not conceited that the outward part is the worship, and the inward is but a conceit. Brethren, the living God will have living services, the God of our spirits, will have the service of our spirits ; the worshipping god in spirit, this is the true worship God wil not be, and take heed you be not cheated with shewes. When all the men of the world, with their wits, parts, and interests, have commended, garnished, and magnified, the carcasse of Religion and decryed, and disgraced its soul and life, yet this shall still stand, as an irrefragable Truth. They are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirits, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

2. Worshipping God through the spirit,
M 3 through

through the help and assistance of the Spirit of God; as to the instance in prayer, Jude 23. *Praying in the holy Ghost, Rom. 8.26. The Spirit it self helpeth our infirmities.* The Spirit of God affords a three-fold help in prayet.

1. He Endites our requestts; suggests matter of prayer to us; who as the Apostle there tells us, *Knew not what we should pray for as we ought.* Carnal mens lusts doe often make their prayers, and then no wonder they ask amisse; when they should be seeking the death of their lust, they ask meat for their lusts; we often, not knowing what we ought to ask, do ask we know not what; we ask a stone, a serpent, a scorpion, sometimes, when we think we ask bread: If God should always give his people their prayert, their prayers would undo them. When we are poor we ask riches, and it may be if God should give us them, our riches might undo us: Sometimes we ask ease, or credit, or liberty, and if we had what we ask: it might be our ruin; the Spirit of God knows what fit for us, and accordingly guides our prayers; He helps us to understand our sins, and so teaches us what confession to make; carnal men will confess sins, but any sin rather then their own. He helps us to understand our wants, and so teaches us what to ask; He helps us to understand our mercies, and so teaches us what to give thanks for; carnal men often come before the Lord with mock-praises, give thanks for their election, justification, sanctification, hope of glory, when it may be, the power of sin, and the wrath of God abides upon them, and they remain without Christ, and without hope, & without God in the

the world? the Spirit of God, if they had him, woald make their devotions more reasonable and regular.

2. He excites, and quickens, and enlarges their hearts in prayer. The Spirit of God comes in and influences upon the heart, and draws forth the soul; and this is the import of the following words, *The spirit is self makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered*; that is, he sets us a groaning and sighing after the Lord. Groaning notes the strength and ardency of desire, which though the fervency of it, puts the soul to pain, and an holy impatience till it be heard: in which sense its used, Verse 21. *For we our selves, who have received the first fruits of the spirit, groane within our selves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of our body.* It works such groanings as cannot be uttered; it sometimes make the hearts of Christians to big for their mouths, their desires more larg then their expressions; as much warmth and life, and strength of affection as ther does appear without ther's more within: Oh, how flat and dead are our hearts oftentimes; how much are we strakned in our prayers, we stand as men struck dumb when we come before the Lord, or if there be words in our mouths, there is scarce any word in our hearts; sometimes we cannot speak, and if we can speak we cannot groan; the Spirit doth either put words in our mouths, or else supply the want of words, by kindling and enlarging inward desires; helping us to groan out a prayer when we cannot speak it out; and silent groans will sound in the ears of the Lord, when the loudest cryes may not be heard.

He encourages and emboldens the heart in prayer, enables us to call God *Father*, to pray to him, to cry to him, to be confident of audience, and acceptance with him, upon this ground; Gal. 4. 6. *God bath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father.* And hereby he furnisheth us with a mighty argument to plead with God; Father hear me, Father forgive me, Father pity me, Father help me: Am not thy childe, thy son, or thy daughter? To whom may a childe be bold to go? With whom may a childe have hope to speed, if not with his Father? Father hear me; The Fathers of our flesh are full of bowels, and full of pity to their children, and know how to give good things to them, when they ask them; when they ask bread, will they deny them? when they ask clothes, or any thing they want, will they deny them? And is not the Father of Spirits more full of bowels, more full of bounty, then the Fathers of our flesh? Father hear me.

This is praying in the Spirit, and if this be a fancy with you, I must tell you sinners, that it's such a fancy, as experienced Christians that have most proved it, would not lose for all your substance. But will you stand to it? Is this Fanatical praying indeed? then bring your *Index expurgatorius*, and expunge these Texts out of the Scriptures, or else, if you let them stand, and look over them again, you will next say, *Their Bible is as Fanatical as themselves.*

But let me add one word, to convince you from your own judgement, (if you understand what you do) that praying in the Spirit is no fancy;

fancy; and this, by putting this one question to you; Dare any of you all, when you go to God in Prayer, deliberately refuse to beg the assistance of his Spirit? Whether you use a Form, or pray without a Form, that is not so material: The assistance of the Spirit is needed as well of those that use a Form, as of those that pray without it: Now dare you, I say, when you go to pray deliberately, refuse to beg the assistance of the Spirit? Dare you say, *Lord, I need not, nor desire any such assistance; I will not ask it of thee, that thy Spirit may be given into me, to help mine infirmities?* If you beg the assistance of the Spirit, you hope to have it; and if you have it, there is that praying in the Spirit, which you cry down for a fancy: Judge now, whether you do not condemn the things which your selves allow, and in your judgement and practice justify the reality of that duty, which with your mouths you decry for Fanatical; *Will you also be his Disciples? Will you also be Fanaticks?*

2: Walking in the Spirit, this is no fancy, *Gal. 5. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* In the prosecution of this I shall shew,

1. What is meant by the Spirit.
2. What by walking in the Spirit.
3. That this is no Fancy.

1. What is meant by the Spirit here: That, being something that is opposed to the flesh, or corruption, as appears, *verse 16, 17.* must of necessity be one of these two things, possibly both, either the *Holy Ghost*, and the influence, assistance, and operations of that holy Spirit; or else that

New Nature which is begotten in us by the Spirit ; the grace of the Spirit infused into our hearts, and abiding in us : which of the two we understand it of, the difference will not be considerable.

2. What is meant by *walking in the Spirit* : Some there are, that by Spirit understand the Doctrine of Christianity ; and accordingly, would have this walking in the Spirit, to be nothing else, but the embracing the Christian Religion. But if this be so, then what is to be understood by flesh, which *vers. 17.* Is said to be contrary to this Spirit? Why, by flesh they will tell us, we are to understand Judaism: but then let me ask.

1. What is meant by the lusts of this flesh which was now dead, against the Spirit? Is that the meaning of it, *Judaism lusteth against Christianity*?

2. How can this dead flesh have such a numerous off-spring, as is mentioned, *vers. 10.* The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatries, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, &c.*

Must all these hearts be laid at the door of the Synagogue? Are these the brood of that *Ceremonious Law of carnal Commandments*, or are they not manifestly the fruits of that *corrupt law of carnal Concupiscence*? I know not with what shadow or reason we can understand by the flesh, any thing else but Lust or Concupiscence ; and then by the Spirit we must understand Grace, or the Spirit of Grace, which bid defiance, and are contrary to it.

Let

Let us consider further, What is meant by that expression, of being *led by the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 14. Why, possibly the same men will tell us, there is no more in this than in the former; it imports no more than the Spirits *leading us into all truth*, the truth of the Gospel, as the Star led the Wise men of the East to the *Messiah*: If this be granted to be all, yet here we have gotten something *viz.* That the Spirit of God is acknowledged to be our leader: but let us consider one Scripture more, *Ezek. 35. 27.* *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes.* What are those Statutes of God: but the whole Will and Word of God: One or two of them I shall mention; *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me: Work out your salvation with fear and trembling: Quench not the Spirit: Abstain from all appearance of evil: See that you walk circumspectly, &c.* Are not these and many more such, found and unrepeal'd in his great Statute-book? What is it to walk in these Statutes, other than to live in the sincere obedience to the whole Will of God? Now, says the Lord, *I will give them my Spirit, and he shall cause them to help them to walk in my Statutes, to live an holy life.* Let these things be considered, and see if they will not help us to a better interpretation of these words: *Walk in the Spirit.* Why what is the meaning then of them: I shall give you the judgement of one who was no *Phantastic*: *Cornelius A Lapide*, who in his *Commentary* on verse 16. of this Chapter, interprets the same words thus, *Walk in the Spirit.* that is, *Vitam, actiones & mores instituisse secundum dictamen, instinctum*

ffinatum, impulsum spiritus, ac gratia immissa & induit a vobis a spiritu sancto, qui suadet & monet ut spiritualiter vivamus.

To walk in the Spirit, signifies,

1. To live under the conduct of the Spirit.
2. To live in the power of the Spirit.
3. To live a spiritual Life.

1. To live under the conduct and guidance of the Spirit, Rom. 8.15. *As many as are (led) by the Spirit are the Sons of God:* There is a double guide, whereby the Lord leads his people: The guide of his Word. Psalm 73: 24. *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel.* And the guide of his Spirit. John 16.13. *He shall lead you into all Truth.* There are two Things which the Spirit doth in leading on his people

First, He enlightens their eyes, opens their understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures, which point out to us our way. Luke 24.45. *Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.*

Secondly, He takes them by the hand as it were, and leads them. Isa. 40. 11. *He shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

2. To live in the power of the Spirit, or of that inherent and assisting Grace which we receive from him, to be carried on in an holy course, and all the duties of it, both from the *intrinsecal* power of the life of God begotten in us, and by the concurrent influences and assistance of the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given us, to help our infirmities. As in the duty of Prayer,

Prayer, Rom. 8.26. So in all other Christian duties ; John 15. 5. *without me* (says Christ, that is , without the assistance of my Spirit) *ye can do nothing*. Therefore the Psalmist resolves, Psal. 71. 16. *I will go in the Strength of the Lord, and by thee I will make mention of thy Name*: And this living in the power of the Spirit , is no other then is signified (if we did understand what we say) in those common expressions which we ordinarily have in our mouths ; *By the grace of God* , or *by the help of God* , I will do this , or that : What the Apostle speaks of himself as Minister, is applicable to Christians ; 1 Cor. 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*.

Thus to walk in the Spirit , is to follow those directions, and intimations of the Will of God, which he gives us out of the Word: and those impulses of the Spirit upon our hearts, whereby, as by a gale of wind filling our sails , he moves and helps us on. When you find any clear light , breaking in from the Word upon your Consciences, and thereupon some stirrings upon your hearts, either by the way of check restraining , and calling you back from any irregular or disorderly walking ; or quickening and encouraging you in a duty , this you may safely take to be from the Spirit , and when you entertain this light, obey these checks, and follow these holy impulses ; this is your walking in the Spirit.

3. To live a spiritual Life. In whom the Spirit hath begotten another heart, those he leads on

on in another life. He that is born of the Spirit is a spiritual man, and those that are led by the spirit walk on in a spiritual course, that is; they live a more noble and raised life then the rest of the world. Carnal men who are governed & ruled by that evil spirit that is in the world, live an evil and carnal life; worldly spirited men a worldly life; sensual men a sensual life: *Ephes. 2. 2, 3.* *Wherin in time past ye walked after the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom we also had our conversations in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.* Whilst we were in the common state we took the common road, whilst we were in the flesh, fleshly men, we lived a fleshly life. To serve our bellies, to serve our appetites, to serve our pride, and covetousness and other lusts, This was our life. And this life was satiable to that Spirit which was within them, and that evill spirit the Prince of this world without them; that governed and steer'd their course: Accordingly the Saints having a new heart within, and a new leader without, do lead a new life; as the Flesh and the Devil carry evil men on in a course suitable to their leaders, so the Spirit and Grace of God carry on the Saints in a course suitable to theirs, an holy, spiritual, and heavenly life. So that this is to walk in the Spirit, to live holily and Spiritually; this is that which is called, *The Life of God, Ephes. 4. 19. The Conversation in Heaven, Phil. 3. 20. Our conversation is in Heaven.* And a Spiritual and heaven Life, this may be called, upon a Threefold account;

i. Their

1. Their dealings are about Spiritual and Heavenly things.
2. Their delights are Spiritual and Heavenly.
3. By these spiritual dealings and delights themselves become daily more spiritual.

1. Their dealings are about Spiritual and Heavenly things: God, and Heaven, and everlasting Glory; and those spiritual exercises, whereby God is served, and Glory obtained: these are the matters about which this life is spent: They live with God, they hold daily intelligence with Heaven, they are much in the contemplating, and admiring, and adoring the infinite beauty and incomprehensible perfections of God and his unspeakable love, and grace, and goodness towards them. They are searching into the Mysteries of Christ, studying out the riches of the glory of the Mystery of the Gospel: They live amongst Angels, their hearts and their eyes are daily in that general Assembly and Church of the Firstborn: When they sleep they lay them down under the wings of their Lord; no sooner are they awake, but they get them up to the top of Pisgah, to take a view of the Promised Land: *When I awake I am ever with thee*, sayes the Psalmist: When the Covetous man awakes, he is with his god, when the Epicure awakes, he is with his god: when the Adulterer awakes, he is with his goddess: Christians are presently above the Clouds, above the Stars, falling down before the Throne of the Almighty: Their work is to seek, and serve, and praise, and please the Lord, to carry themselves so, that they may

may be accepted of God ; to be washing their Robes, and making them white in blood of the Lamb ; to be minding their Souls, Consciences, Affections, Thoughts ; that these may all, in their several capacities, exalt and enjoy the Lord : Their trading is for the *Pearl*, whilst the *Merchants* of the Earth are trading for Gold, and Silver, and Spices, whilst the *Musk-worms* of the World are dealing in Corn, and Sheep, and Oxen, and Asses, whilst the *voluptuous wantons* of the earth are dealing about Fashions, and Feasts, and Sports, treading in Toys, Feathers, Apes, and Peacocks, Christians are trading in Promises and Prayer, in Faith and Repentance, in Patience and Humility, in Mercy and Charity, that by these they may make their *calling and election sure*, and so an entrance may be administered unto them abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These are the busynesses of Christians lives, their dealings are about spiritual things.

2. Their delights are in spiritual things : The Lord is the delight of their hearts : *Delight thyself in God*, saith the *Psalmist*, *Psal. 37.4.* And what he bids others do, he does himself, *Psal. 16. 8, 9.* *I have set the Lord always before me, therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rijuyceth* : The thoughts of God are dear and precious to them ; The Word and Law of God is their delight, *Psal. 1.* *His delight is in the Law of his God* : The *Courts of the Lord*, his Ordinances, Worship, Sabbaths, are their delight, *Psal. 84. 1.* *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts*. Their work is their delight, *Psal. 40.* *I delight to*

do thy will : Their *hardest work's*, Fasting, and Watching, and Wrestling, and Fighting against sin and temptations, crucifying and mortifying their own flesh, denying themselves, mourning for sin : there's much sweetnesse they find in their very travails, and tears, and sorrowings ; *as sorrowing*, says the Apostle, *yet always rejoicing*. As Solomon speaks of carnal mirth, Prov. 14. *In the midst of laughter, the heart is sad* : so it may be said of spiritual mourning, in the midst of sorrow, the heart is joyful ; the heart of a Saint, is never in so sweet a frame, as when it is melted into godly sorrow. But especially, Christ is their delight, he is the *deliciae Christiani orbis*, Cant. 2. 3. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight* : Carnal men are ready to say to them, as the Daughters of Jerusalem to the Spouse, Cant. 5. 9. *What is thy beloved, more then another beloved?* What beauty is there in him, that thou shouldest thus desire him, or take such pleasure in him? They see no beauty in him, he hath no Form, nor comeliness in their eye, and therefore they think there is none. Oh sinners, you do not know Christ, you have had no acquaintance with him, you have not tasted of the fruits of this Tree, or the clusters of this Vine : *I sat me down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my [taste.]* Saints have tasted of the sweetnesse of Christ ; tasted that the Lord is gracious, and therefore can take great delight in him. The delight they take in Christ, is that which puts such a delight into every Ordinance, into every Duty ; therefore Praying, and

Reading is so pleasant to them, because there they meet with their beloved: Christ appears to them in his Word; Christ meets his Saints in their Prayings and Fastings, and this makes all sweet to their souls. Carnal men think the life of Saints to be an heavy, a sad and most troublesome life; they count that themselves have the only merry and pleasant lives; that their Hawks, and Hounds, their Carding and Dicing, and Drinking, and Dancing, their Stews, and Plays, that these are the only Heaven: This is all one, as to say, That God hath put more sweetnesse into creatures then is in himself; that the basest and vilest use of the creatures doth yield more true content, then the souls exercising it self on God; as if the thorn should yield more sweetnesse, the bramble more fatnesse then the Fig-tree or Olive; where are the understandings of these men? I tell you sinners, when you have gone from flower to flower, from creature to creature, from pleasure to pleasure, and sucked out all the fatnesse and sweetnesse that these will yield, a poor Christian will get more real pleasure out of one Chapter of his Bible, out of an honest Sermon, out of one hours converse with God in Prayer, then your whole life will bring you in. The Gospel, with its breasts of consolation, at wh^{ch} he sucks, yields him sweeter milk; those clusters of *Canaan*, on which he lives, yield him richer Wine then the whole world will afford any: The gleanings of a Christians joy, are better then the vintage of sinners; and you cannot so much slight the glory of their Sun, as they despise the glory of your sparks.

3. By these spiritual exercises and delights, they become more and more spiritual themselves. By their beholding the Face of God, they are changed from glory to glory, into his Image and likeness: by living so much in Heaven, the temper and frame of their hearts becomes heavenly; mens ordinary company and exercises have such an influence upon them, that 'tis not unusual that they change their disposition. Frothy company, and vain exercises, will leave a earthiness and vanity upon mens spirits, and serious, and savoury company, and exercises, do leave a goodavour behind them. He whose work is in the Coal-mines, his hiew is thereafter; the flies that feed on the dung, look like the dung they feed on. Carnal men, by being continually conversant about their earthly affairs, have nothing but earthiness left upon their spirits; their thoughts, affections, their souls are become *earth, earthly*; their duties are *earthly*, their prayers, their praises, their hearings, all are *earthly*: When they go to Church, when they go to their Clossets, they must carry their earth along with them, or leave their hearts behind them. On the other side, Christians, by having their dwellings with God, their delights, their recreations, their daily business with God; the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon them; by their *divine exercises*, they are made more *partakers* of the *Divine Nature*; and as Worldlings businesses and delights, do leave an earthiness upon their very Religion, so a Christian Religion doth spiritualize his civil affairs: Carnal mens Prayers, do savour of their Fields,

Oxen, and Sports: Carnal mens Sabbaths do smell of their working dayes, and a Christians works do favour of his prayers; a Christians week-days have a tincture of his Sabbaths; he eats and drinks, he buys and sells, he ploughs and threshes, not as a man, but as a Saint, he doth not only pray as a Saint, and hear as a Saint, but he ploughs as a Saint, he trades as a Saint; his heart is in heaven, while his hand is at the plough; he is serving his God, whilst he is serving his own necessities; he seeks, he serves, he eyes, he enjoys his God in all he hath or doth; he proves by his sense that *God is every where*; with him he dwells, feeds, labours, lodges, with him he lives, he dies.

And thus you see what it is to walk in the Spirit. Look how far forth a Christian lives in the Spirit, so far forth doth he live such a life as this.

3. This is no fancy; and if I fail not here, if I prove this, I hope sinners, you will then see reason enough to take the Phanatick upon your selves, and from henceforth stile these despised Saints in your *Stilo Novo, Israelites indeed*

Christians (you that hear me this day) will you help me in this proof, this once help me, and the cause will go clearly on the Lords side; you may, if you will, come in, and be living instances of this Truth. Will you live according to your Principles, that Life of God which is within you? Will you live according to your Rules, that Word of Life which is before you? Will you follow your Leader, that holy Spirit which is given to conduct you? Will you fall closer.

closer to the practice of that Godlinesse which you professe, will you live in the obedience of that spirit which you have received, will you shew your selves a pattern of faith, of patience, of righteousnesse, and holinesse? Will you be dealing less about these earthly vanities, and be less earthly, in your earthly dealings; shall your dealings be wholly about heaven and heavenly things, and will you make these your dealings your delights? Will you labour by being more conversant about spiritual things, and in spiritual exercises, to become more spiritual, more spiritually minded, more spiritually temper'd? Will you get more clear off the love, and lusts, and fashions, and ways, and joys of this world? Will you suffer the Eternal Spirit to fill you with his love, and fashion you into his likenesse? Will you forbear any more resisting, grieving, slighting, quenching his holy motions, will you hearken to his counsels, answer his impulses? Will you grow on to be more Christians daily, more Saints daily, Saints in heart, Saints in tongue, Saints in the general frame of your course? Will you make your graces more visible, your comforts more visible, more spiritual joys and delights more visible; will you let your light so shine before men, that they must either put out their own eyes, or else be forced to acknowledge that God is in you of a truth?

Brethren, we may much thank our selves for all our Adversaries slanders, we have helped them to reproaches, we have furnished them with accusations; by our walking so much in the flesh, and so little in the spirit, we have taught

them to question, whether there be any such thing as walking in the Spirit. The Lord pardon us, the Lord make us sensible of it, we have brought up an *evil report* upon our God, upon his Spirit, Gospel and ways; and for ought we know have undone many poor wretches, by our hardening them in their misconceits of Godlinesse and Religion: There hath been so much drosse in our gold, so much ashes upon our fire, so much earth upon our spirits, such sad mixtures of water with our wine, so much liberty taken for our carnal joys, and carnal pleasures; our light hath been so dim, our grace hath been so low, our good works have been so spare, and so thin, that we have made them bold to say, we are not what we are, but are a meer lye and deceit; And we have now no such way to vindicate our selves, our Religion, our holy Profession, to justifie our God and his Gospel, as by blowing up the coals, shaking off our ashes, stirring up the Graces of God within us, and letting them have their perfect work in us. Will you Christians, will you hearken to me in this? Then I should be bold to bring you forth as witnesses for God and his Truth. However, though upon your account it would be the more comfortable, though, *ex abundanti*, I would bring in as many Evidences, as possible, yet if you should fail me, or any other particular Congregation of Professors, yet let the world know, I have sufficient proof ready at hand. For,

If this walking in the Spirit be a fancy, then these damnable absurdities will unavoidably follow:

1. That

1. That the Spirit of the Lord is unfaithful in his Office.
2. That God himself is false in his Promise.
3. That the Devil doth more to the damning of souls, than the Spirit of God to the saving them.
4. That God hath no people, no peculiar people in the world.

1. If walking in the Spirit be a fancy, *the Spirit is unfaithful in his Office.* That the Spirit of God is given to the people of God, to every one of them, is so plainly asserted, that he must deny the Scriptures that doth not grant it, *Rom. 8.9. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you: Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* That there are certain operations of the Spirit, which he is by Office to performe, is as certain, as, 1. *To Enlighten;* Therefore he is called the *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation,* *Ephes. 1. 17,18.* 2. *To Sanctifie;* Therefore sanctification is called, *The sanctification of the Spirit,* *2 Thes. 2.13.* 3. *To Lead,* *John 16.13. He shall lead you into all truth.* 4. *To Assist,* and help, *Rom. 8. 26. Ezek. 36. 27.* 5. *To Comfort;* Therefore is he called, *The Comforter.* If the Spirit of the Lord doth this Office, then there are persons that are *Enlightned, Sanctified, Led, Assisted, Comforted* by him: If there be none such, if the comfort of the Saints be but pretended, if their light, their help, their quickenings, their encouragement be all fancies, if they be but led in conceit, quickned in conceit, comforted in conceit,

ceit, then where is the Spirits faithfulness? See what blasphemies men run themselves upon before they are aware. Sinners, take heed what you do; you are bold to reproach the Saints with *The Spirit, the Spirit*, but take heed mean while of reproaching the Spirit with *unfaithfulness*: blasphemy against the Spirit is no small sin; though every blaspheming of the Spirit be not that *unpardonable sin*, yet it is a fair step towards it: Look to your selves.

2. If walking in the Spirit be a fancy, then God himself is false in his Promise, Ezekiel 36. verse 27. before mentioned, *I will put my Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in my Statutes.* If there be no such thing done, then where is the Promise of God? He that makes walking in the Spirit to be nothing but talk, makes the Promise of God to be nothing but words.

3. If walking in the Spirit be but a fancy, Then *the Devil doth more to the destroying of souls, than the Spirit of the Lord doth to the salvation of souls.* Let us consider again that Scripture, Eph. 2.2. *Wherin in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.* There are two things there observable to our purpose: 1. Sinners are led by the Devil. 2. They are assisted and excited by the Devil. 1. They are led by the Devil; that's noted in that expression, *They walk on according to the Prince of the power of the air;* according to his guidance, according to his mind and his will, he hath them at his beck.

Whin

When he sayes go, they go; and when he sayes come, they come; and when he sayes, do this, they do it. But how comes this to passe, that the Devil can hold such an hand over them, can lead them thus at pleasure? Why, 2. They are assisted and excited by the Devil; that evil spirit works in them, suggests evil thoughts into them, and thereby excites, and provokes, and sets them a work. The Devil is said, *Act. 5. To fill the hearts of Ananias and Saphira, to lye against the Holy Ghost:* And when he had once put a lye into their hearts, their hearts presently put a lye into their mouths. When the Devil hath wrought wickednesse into the hearts of sinners, then they presently fall to working it out. When wicked men lye, it is the Devil lyes in them, when they curse, and rage, and swell with madnesse, the Devil rages in them; when the lusts of men bring forth adulteries, drunkennesse, riot, revelling, &c. the Devil lies within blowing up the coales. Is this but a conceit, that wicked men *walk in the Spirit?* that unclean Spirit? that the Devil draws them on, and drives them on, and helps them on, and hardens them on in their wickednesse? Could men be so wicked as they are, could there be such quarrellings, and contentions, such debaucheries and villanies, such cursings and blasphemings, such rottennesse and ribaldries coming out of mens mouths, and abounding in their lives? Could there be so much constancy, fruitfulness, boldnesse, hardnesse in sinning, against all fears, warnings, reproofs, counsels, against conscience, and the dictates of their reason and common sense, were it not for that evil spirit

spirit that works in these children of disobedience? Now if it be no fancy, that wicked men *walk in the spirit* (this you must grant, or else you must conclude that they are all Devils themselves) and if you grant it, can you conceive it to be but a fancy that the Saints *walk in the Spirit*? If the Devil works lies, and oaths, and curses into the hearts of sinners, sure you may well allow that the Spirit of God works duties, works a prayer or prayses, &c. into the hearts of Saints. Could a poor Christian, that hath so many corruptions within, so many temptations without, so many weaknesses, hinderances, discouragements, ever follow the Lord in his holy wayes against them all, if he had no other spirit then his own to carry him on? The Saints sure have as much need of that help which is from above, to carry them on in holiness unto life, as sinners have of that which is from beneath, to carry them on in iniquity to destruction: And me thinks you should not question but the Spirit of God will be as active to save, as the Devil is busie to destroy.

4. If walking in the Spirit be but a fancy, then God hath no people in the world, Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* *As many, that is, just so many, and no more.* God hath no more children in the world, then there are persons that are led by the Spirit: to be led by the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit, signifie one and the same thing. If then there be no such thing, nor no such person in the world to be found, where then are Gods children? God hath no child if this be so: You must write *the God of all the earth childlesse, a Father without*

a Child, a King without a People, if these *wise men* be *true men*; and *true men* you can very hardly call them, who have robbed the King of Saints of all his Subjects, and the Father of Lights of all his Children.

You see now to what a plain issue this matter is also brought: If you be in the right in this thing, then the Spirit of God must be unfaithful in his Office, God must be false in his Promise, the Devil doth more to the damning, then the Spirit of God doth to the saving of souls; and one of these two things will follow hence, either that the Devil is of more might then the Almighty Spirit, or that the God of Love hath not so much love as the Devil hath malice; and lastly, that God hath no People in the world.

But it may be sinners, you will yet reply, Well, we will grant that this is true, that there are those that are led by the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit; but when you talk of so much spirituality in mortal men, of such high notions, as living in the fellowship of the Spirit, living in Heaven, when you tell us of such glorious light, such raptures of joy, such ecstasies of spiritual delights, here are the fancies; these are the things which we cannot but account the foolish dreams of deluded hearts.

And now you think you have hit it at last. But is not this it which you say, The Spirit enlightens, but gives no light: The enlightened see no more then the blind: The Spirit renews men, and yet they are not changed: The Spirit leads the Saines, and yet they follow him just as fast as those that have no legs: The Spirit dwells in them,

them, and yet they have no more fellowship or acquaintance with him, than those that never saw him. The Spirit afflicts, and yet gives no help: The Spirit comforts, and yet gives no joy; but after all he hath done, leaves them just as other men, and whatsoever they pretend to have more, is a mere cheat and delusion. The sum of all comes to this, The Spirit doth, and yet doth not, doth something, some great thing, and yet that something is just nothing.

But is there no such life of God, wherein the Lord having gotten the chief interest in the heart, hath also the dominion of the life? Is there no such life, the main dealings and busynesse whereof, is the pleasing and honouring of God, and the seeking that glory and honour which is from him? Must God be an underling to the world, and be put off with our spare hours which the world will allow him? We were even as good down-right to profess we own no God at all; or if we must have one, a *Baal*, or an *Astartoth*, a *Misroch*, or a *Molech*, an Ox or a Calf, may serve us well enough for a god; a God to be so trampled on, or to be said unto, *stand aside*, when ever the world hath any thing for us to do.

Is there no such spiritual life, the comforts whereof are spiritual comforts, the pleasures and delights spiritual pleasures and delights? Are there no delights in God, who is a *Well of life*, and the Fountain of all blessednesse? Have the creatures their several sweetnesses issuing from them, the Sun its light, the Fire its warmth, the Fig-tree its sweetnesse, the Olive-tree its fatnesse, the fruits of the earth their pleasant tastes and smells, the Instruments

struments of musick their melodious airs and sounds to gratifie and please our senses, and is the Fountain onely a dry and unsavoury thing, when the Cisterns are so fresh and full ? Have fleshly exercises their several pleasures ; are the labours of the Husband-man, the Travels of the Merchant, so strangely sweetned by the gain and in-come of them ? Are May-games, and Morrice-dances, sports and plays, so delightsome to men, that they will sell their souls for such pleasures ; and are they the exercises of Religion onely, that have no juyce nor sweetnesse in them ? Is it Godlineffe onely that hath *no bud, the stalk whereof yields no meat* ? Or are the delights and comforts hereof such fleshly and airy things, that we cannot tell, when we taste them, whether we be awake or in a dream ? Once more consider the Scriptures ; *How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings : they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatnesse of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures ; for within thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light. Delight thy self also in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy hearts desire. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more then in the time, when their corn and wine increased : with joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation. Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts.* Let him that readeth understand ; do all these speak the Life of Saints to be such a dry, and dark, and impleasant life ?

Let

Let me farther ask you theſe two Questions.

1. Are there any delights in Heaven? Is there any joy before the throne, and in the face of God? Are there any pleasures at his right hand? Doth the Tree of Life, that stands in the midſt of the Paradise of God, yield any pleasant fruit? Doth the Chriftal River, that runs through the City of God, yield any pleasant streams? Are the exercises of glory, blifſing, praises, and ſingings, *Hallelujah, Hallelujah*, are there any pleasures in theſe? ſpeak finners, what do ye think, are there any delights in Heaven?

2. Is there not ſomething of that heavenly joy and delight let down to the Saints here? Whilit they bear a part in the ſame exercises, have they not a little ſhare in the ſame pleasure? What means then the earnest of their Inheritance, which is given here? The Apostle tells us, Eph. 1.13,14. That the Saints, after they had believed, were ſealed with the holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our Inheritance. An earnest is a part of that, whereof it is an earnest; given in hand; The earnest of our Inheritance is a part of the Inheritance.

Believe it finners, Gods Earnest is no Jeſt; God will not mock his Saints, though you do. As finners, to their cost, ſo Saints, to their comforts, feel that Gods Earnest is in earnest.

As the Lord ſometimes (though more ſeldom) cauſes ſomeлаſhings of his wrath to flie out in the faces, to kindle in the ſouls, and burn in the bowels of ſome incorrigible finners, as an earnest of thoſe everlasting flames prepared for them, beginning their hell upon earth, ſo doth he let fall

fall some handfuls of that Harvest, some drops of that new Wine, the fuller draughts whereof are reserved to that time when they shall sit down with him in his Kingdom; and this as *the earnest of their inheritance*; something of the same joys, the same pleasures (for kind) with those that are laid up for them, and hereby assured to them. And is there not yet enough to convince you?

If you will still hold your own, and go about to perswade us that all this is but fancy, we must give the same credit to you, that your selves would give to a man that were born biind, who had never seen either Sun or Star, and hearing you to discourse of them, should laugh at you for *Phanaticks*, and tel you there were no such things as Sun, or Stars, or Light; you would believe your own eyes before the blind mans blind confidence; you would pity rather then credit him, and so must we you.

Do ye wonder there should be such things and you not see them? The *Riches* of Christians are *hidden riches*: the *Manna* of Saints is *hidden Manna*. The *White Stone* and the *New Name* are not within the ken of vulgar eyes: Think not it is our pride or vanity thus to speak; doth not our Lord say the same thing? *Revel. 2.17.* *No man knoweth it but he that hath it.* *A stranger shall not meddle with his joy.* The *sweetnesse* of Religion lies deep, the rich Wines are in the Cellar; the rich Mines are in the bowels of the Earth; the best of sin is in sight, the Flower and the Cream is at the top, and the Bran and the Lees is at the bottom; sin is Honey in the mouth, but Wormwood in the belly. Sinners you have

not gone deep enough in Religion, to come to the pleasure of it: And will you therefore say, there is none in it? You may as well say, there is no gall and wormwood in sin, because you have not yet met with a bitter drop; that all the anguish and horror, that all those pangs of misery, those gnawings, and gripings, and torments that are said to be in sin, are meer fancies, because you have not yet felt them: But stay a while, you are not yet at the bottom, the dregs are yet some draughts lower. Oh the under-ground fruits of sin! when these shall come up, then you shall taste what gall and gravel there is in it; never think you are secure from sorrow, a draught or two deeper may confute you with a witnessse. And so on the other side, there is no ground to suspect that the sweetnesse of Religion is a nothing, because some smatters about it, which have only trifled upon the surface and outside of it, have not had the least taste of any such thing: The brackishnesse and bitternesse of Religion is at top, the best is at bottom; the Wine-cellar is lower then yet you have gone. If you would be perswaded to go deeper, to set in more closely and throughly with a godly life, your own fences would at length confute your censures, and what ever you have heard spoken concerning the comforts and delights of holiness, you would say with the Queen of Sheba, *The one half was not told me.*

We will freely grant you, that all is not gold that glisters; there are false fires, false joyes, false comforts, which many pretenders to Christianity have boasted of, who yet have had *no part nor lot in this matter*; and to such as these both

both Saints and sinners have been but little beholding ; the calumnies that light upon them, and the blindness that abides on these, lie much upon the score of such false lights : but because some men dream they are eating and drinking, or that they are rich, or making merry, Will you therefore that are eating, or drinking, or rich or rejoicing, conclude that you also are but in a dream ? because that there are Comets that shine amongst the stars, are they all Comets ? Are there no stars, because there are glow-worms that shine ? Is the Sun but a glow-worm ?

Shall I add one word more ? You that yet hold the same tune, and still cry out, Fancy, fancy, all is but fancy ; tell me, that I may know that you are in earnest, and believe your own talk ; tell me, Dare any of you come and subscribe this with your hand ; *This Godlineſſe which you have been here commanding to me, with all its comforts, joys, and delights, I do utterly renounce for ever ; let me never know what any thing of this means, nor have my part hereafter with this godly People.* Dare you put your hand to this ? It's some comfort to us, to hope that Religion hath an Advocate in the Consciences of its Adversaries.

But if it have not, yet know sinners, *That wisdom shall be justified of her Children.* And as for you, *Beware lest that come upon you, which is spoken by one of the Prophets ; Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish ; for I work a work in your days, which you will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

The Application of the whole.

Use 1. Having thus, by the help of God, vindicated the good wayes of the Lord from the cavils and reproaches of unreasonable men ; and proved to you in this, and the precedent discourse, that the precipitist Christians are the wisest men ; and that that Godliness, which is cryed down for folly and fancy, is undoubtedly, and indispensably necessary to salvation ; I shall now take you by the hand, and lead you on (as many of you as are willing to follow me) to the practice of it. And in this undertaking, I shall apply my self, 1. To the ungodly. 2. To the godly.

1. I shall speak a few words to the ungodly. Speak now, O ye foolish sinners, is godliness of God ? is Christianity of Christ, or is it not ? Is holiness the way of life, or can you hope to see life without it ? If you say it is not of God, and will stand to it, produce your cause, bring forth your strong reasons ; only I must tell you, if you say any thing, you had need look to it, that it be something of weight that you alledge, in a matter of such importance, ere you do conclude against it.

Let your consciences speak, for to them (if you will forbear consulting with lust) I dare now appeal ; let your Consciences speak, whose voice is this ? See that you walk circumspectly. *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life.* God hath set apart him that is godly for himself : *Follow holiness, without which no man shall see God.*

Speak

Speak sinners, whose words are these, and what do Precisians speak more, or other then this? Dare you say concerning the way of life, as it hath been described to you; *If this be godliness, let me never see God; I'll never see life, if this be the onely way to it.*

But if your consciences tell you, this is of God, this strait and narrow way, is the onely way of life: Then, oh consider, what is it that you have done, whom is it that you have reproached? Mean you still to hold your course, be it right or wrong, come life, come death?

Is there any among you, whose heart smites him on the mouth, and whispers him thus in the ear, *Blasphemest thou God, revilest thou his servants, and wilt thou still go on to pervert the good ways of the Lord?* Is there any among you that doth enquire, what must I do to get into this way of life? Let such of you hearken unto me, whilst I give these following directions.

Consider that I am now dealing with you, about your entrance upon a godly life; my present businesse is to help you over the threshold, to get you within the strait gate, you must first be Christians, ere you can follow Christ, you must first enter in at the strait gate, ere you can walk on in the narrow way. Now if ever you would attain to the beginning of godliness, take this course.

I. Get these three principles to be deeply fixed in your hearts.

1. That the things which are eternal, are unspeakably more considerable, than the things which are but temporal.

2. That things not seen, are as infallibly certain, as the things which are seen.

3. That according to your present choice, must be your Eternal Lot.

1. That the things which are Eternal, are unspeakably more considerable than the things which are but temporal, It's nothing so considerable, what men enjoy, or suffer in this world, as what they shall enjoy, or may suffer in the world to come: There are good things temporal, and good things Eternal; and there are evil things temporal, and evil things Eternal; the good things temporal, are Meat, and Drink, and Money, and Cloaths, and Ease, and Pleasures, and Credit, &c. and the good things Eternal, are Glory, and Joy, and Rest, and everlasting blessedness; the evil things temporal, are the sufferings, the losses, and wants, the sorrow and shame, and scorn, and torments, that men fall under, or lye under in this life; the evil things to come, are in one word, the Vengeance of Eternal Fire.

The good things, and the evil things of this life, are more perceptible, having the advantage of their presence, and obviousness to our senses; the good things, and the evil things to come, are less understood, having the disadvantage of their distance, and those clouds that do yet keep them out of sight; and hereupon those are slighted, and despised, and these are looked upon, as the onely considerable things; till men be set right in their apprehensions of these things, it will be a vain and fruitlesse attempt, to perswade them to Christ; mistakes and

and missapprehensions here, are the ground of
mens miscarriages.

The difficulty of persuading sinners to Christ, lies mainly here; There is so much to be lost, and left for Christ, there is so much to be suffered and undergone; so much labor, so much hardship and trouble, that they cannot see how Christianity and Godliness can ever make them amends for what they are like to suffer; they will not be made sensible, that things Eternal, will ballance the things that are before them; they will not easily be persuaded; but that they shall be great losers by hearkening to Christ: Now, whence is it that men are thus foolish? If they did but clearly understand, and were deeply affected with the vast difference, that is betwixt the vain glory of the world, and the weight of that glory that is to come; betwixt the light afflictions of this life, and the astonishing torments of the other world, they would sure be of another mind; the great objections against Godliness, would then be all answered, and removed.

Thou sayest sinner, it's hard to part with thine ease, and thy pleasure, and thy liberty, and thy carnal contentments and delights, which if thou wilt follow Christ, thou seest must all go. But how wilt thou bear it, to be shut out of the everlasting Kingdom, to be shut out from the presence of God? Art thou indeed of the mind of that Atheist, that said, *He would not leave his part in Paris, for his part in Paradise?* Thou canst not endure the trouble and persecution of this world, but how wilt thou endure the torments and plagues of the other world?

Oh, if thou wert but sensible, what that exceeding eternal weight of glory is, what thou wilt find everlasting death and darkness to be; then what insignificant things would all things that are now before thee appear to be! Satan would then want arguments to dissuade sinners from Christ, his tempting trade would quickly grow to be a poor trade, if the concerns of Eternity were clearly understood, and duly regarded.

When the Lord hath once shewed you the wonderful things of Eternity; the true riches, the enduring substance, the lasting joys, his rivers of pleasures, together with the worms that never dyeth, and the fire that never shall be quenched: When the Lord hath shewed you, what an Heaven he hath prepared for the Saints, what an Oven he hath prepared for sinners; then neglect Christ if you can, then neglect holiness if you dare; then look down and see, what poor contemptible things, the pleasures and the sufferings here below will appear to be. Oh study things Eternal more, launch forth into these depths, dwell upon the meditations of them, till your hearts, and all that is within you, acknowledge and confess, that things present are nothing to things to come.

2. *That the things that are not seen, are as infallibly certain as the things that are seen.*

There is much Atheism and Infidelity in the hearts of men; and more than they are aware of; If they do not peremptorily conclude, there are no such things; yet, are there not many, whose hearts do question at least,

Whether

Whether there be any such things or no? We have read, and heard of another World, but no Mortal ever saw it: Who ever hath ascended up to Heaven, and brought us up word what he hath seen there? Who ever hath descended into the deep, and brought us up tydings thence? It may be there may be no such matter as another world: If we could speak with one that had been there, that would be something to assure us. But what if it appears, that you may have as great certainty of these things, as if one should rise from the dead, and come and tell you? Do not the Scriptures tell you of such things? The Scriptures are a sure Word, and there is an unquestionable evidence of the truth of what they speak; and you have as great reason to believe them, as if you had the testimony of one raised from the dead; Luke 16. 31. *They have Moses, and the Prophets, if they will not hear them, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* Beloved, if you should see before your eyes, persons rising from the dead; if one should come down from Heaven, and come in here into this Congregation, in all his glorious Robes, with his Palm in his hand, his Crown on his head, the joy and glory of the Lord shining forth in his face, and should declare to you the wonderful things that his eyes had seen, and his heart had been satisfied, and ravished with in the presence of God. If you should see another coming up out of the Deep, with his chains of darkness upon him, with the smell of that infernal fire and brimstone about him, with the print of the Dragon's

Claws appearing in his sleih, and the blacknesse of that smoaking furnace sticking on his face, and hideously roaring out the anguish he felte burning in his bowels, should tell you, This is the state of them that know not God. If you should see two such sights appearing this hour here in the midst of you, Would you not think you had reason to believe, there were an Heaven and an Hell? This Word which is before you, is a farre greater, and a more certaine evidence, than if tydings were thus brought to you by persons rising from the dead. And if you will not give credit to this testimony of God, neither would you give credit to any such testimony. Sinners, believe God, believe him who was once on Earth, and now daily speaks to you from Heaven; believe that Word which is before you; in which appear such beams of divine Light, such an impressle of divine Purity, which hath been so attested by a divine Power, in mighty Signs and Wonders, that you may as well question, whether the Sun hath light, as whether this Word hath truth; believe this Word to be certain, and then question if you can, whether the things not seen are certain or no.

Let these two things sink into your hearts, (sinners) be once settled and established in your hearts, about the importance, and about the truth and certainty of these eternal things, and then you are gotten fairly on-wards in your way towards Christ, and a godly life.

If men were as sore, that there is an Heaven and an Hell, such unspeakable glory, and such intollerable misery; and an Eternity of both; If men

men were as sure of this, and did as verily believe it, as they are sure of what their eyes have seen, and their ears have heard, and their hands have handled : What a *flying* would there be out of the way of Death and Hell, and what a *flocking* would there be into the way of life : Half the work of Preachers, and the hardest half (their persuading work) would then be at an end : There would be as much knocking at their doors for counsel, as now there is at sinners doors for their acceptance.

Oh Brethren, if you were once brought to this passe, if your unbelief was removed, your darknesse taken away, your souls awakened, your eyes opened, to see these marvellous things as unquestionable truths ; would you then scoffe at purenesse, would you then mock at godlinesse, would you then slight reproofs, or need any further conviction of your folly ? You would have an Admonisher within you, a Remembrancer within you, a Reprover within you ; your own Gonsciences would plead with you, for your entertaining of Christ, and embracing his Word, and would continually cry in your ears, What meanest thou, O fool ? Dost thou not see a Kingdome before thee, which may be thine, and art thou willing to lose it ? Dost thou see that gulf of misery and perdition with open mouth gaping for thee, to devour thee ? Arise sluggard, look to thy self, lest, thou be undone before thou art aware.

3. That according to your (choice) in this world
your (lot) must be for ever in the world to come.

Your chusing or refusing Christ and his holy wayes, is that which doth determine your eternal state; chuse Christ, and you make Heaven sure to you; refuse Christ here, and you will be rejected of him for ever.

God doth offer me this choice, either the *strait and the narrow way*, with that life of blessednesse, which is at the farther end of this way; or *the broad way*, with that death and destruction to which it leads: *Christ with his Yoak, his Crosse, and his eternal Crown*; or *the Devil with his golden Mines, his Paradise and eternal Prison*; and all the parts of each of these offers are linked together; choose the Devils golden Mines, and fleshly Paradise, and you must have his Prison too: Take Christs Yoak, and his Crosse, and you shall have his Crown: You cannot take the Devils Paradise and Christs Crown; if you will have his pleasures, you must have his Prison. You cannot obtain life, but you must choose the narrow way that leads to it.

Here is the choice, sinners, that God puts you to, and this is the businesse of this world, to chose for eternity; and that which is the businesse of this life, is the businesse of this hour. This very little piece of your time, and the choice you make now, may be it that will give a final determination what your eternal state shall be: If you make an evil choice now, you may never have a minutes time to choose again for ever. Oh, if your hearts were sensible of this, That there is so much depending upon every hour of your lives, as *Life or Death*,

Death, Heaven or Hell, Eternity, sure you could not but reason thus with your selves, is it a time for me to stand all the day idle? To be laughing or sporting, or to be drudging and scraping for the muck of this Earth? Is this a time for me to stand trifling with Christ, and the Gospel, to make so many delays, to make so many excuses; The terms are too high, the way is too strait, the yoke is too heavy, this I cannot part with, that I cannot bring my heart to subscribe to? Is this the busynesse that is now under debate, what my everlasting state must be? In which of the two Regions of Eternity my lot shall fall; whether I shall be a Saint or a Devil, a vessel of honor, or a vessel of wrath? whether my dwelling shall be in everlasting blessednesse, or in everlasting burnings? Which way the scales do turn now, either for Christ or the world; Do they turn for everlasting? Sure, if matters stand thus, I had need be serious, and consider what I do. This is the first direction, get these three Principles fixed in your hearts; That things Eternal are much more considerable then things temporal; That things not seen, are as infallibly certain as the things that are seen; That upon your present choice depends your eternal lot. Choose Christ and his ways, and you are blessed for ever; refuse, and you are undone for ever. And then,

II. Make your choice.

Put your hearts to it, to turn either to the right hand, or to the left; lay both parts before you, with every link of each; Christ with his Yoke, his Crosse and his Crown; or the Devil with his wealth, his pleasure and his curse: And then putt your

your selves to it thus: Soul, thou seest what is before thee, what wilt thou do? Which wilt thou have, either the Crown or the Curse? If thou choose the Crown, remember that the day thou takest this, thou must be content to submit to the Crosse, and Yoak; the service and the sufferings of Christ, which are linked to it. What sayest thou? Hadst thou rather take the gains and the pleasures of sin, and venture on the Curse? or wilt thou yield thy self a servant unto Christ, and so make sure the Crown?

If your hearts flie off, and would fain wave the businesse, and leave it undetermined; leave them not so, If you be only unresolved, you are resolved; If you remain undetermined for Christ, you are determined for the Devil. Therefore give not off, but follow your hearts from day to day, let them not rest till the matter be brought to an issue, and see that you make a good choice.

This is your chusing the good part, God and the blessednesse of the World to come, for your portion and happiness; and in this is included, Your renouncing the World, and a worldly happiness.

III. *Imbarque with Christ.*

Adventure your selves with him; cast your selves upon his Righteousnesse, as that which shall bring you to God: As a poor captive exile, that is cast upon a strange Land, a Land of Robbers and Murtherers, where he is ready to perish, and having no hope, either of abiding there, or escaping home with life, and meeting at length with a Pilot, that offers to transport him

him safely home , he imbarques with him, and ventures himself , and all he bath in his Vessel : Do you likewise ; You are exiles from the presence of God , and fallen into a Land of Robbers , and Murtherers : Your sins are Robbers , your pleasures are Robbers , your companions in sin are Robbers and Thieves : if you stay where you are you perish , and escape home of your selves you cannot : Christ offers , if you will venture with him , he will bring you home , he will bring you to God : Will you say now to him , Lord Jesus , wilt thou undertake me , wilt thou bring me to God , bring me into the Land of Promise ? With thee will I venture my self ; I cast my self upou thee , upon thy blood , upon thy righteousness , upon thy faithfulness ; I lay up all my hopes , and venture my whole interest , soul and body with thee .

This is your closing with Christ as your Priest . And in this is included your renouncing your own Righteousnesse ; you can never , you will never cast your selves on him alone , till all your self hopes have given up the ghost .

There be *two things* which must necessarily be supposed to a sinners coming to Christ :

1. *A deep sense of his sin and misery.*
2. *An utter despair of himself , and all things else besides Christ.*

1. *A deep sense of his sin and misery :* No man will regard a Saviour , that doth not see himself a sinner : The whole regard not the Physician . Therefore it is said , that the Spirit of God , when he should come to Christianize the

the World, shou'd, in the first place, convince the World of sin; *John 16. 8.* He shall convince the World of sin, he shall demonstrate them sinners, bring up their sins before their eyes, bring home their sins upon their consciences, and make them see themselves, and feel themselves the most vile and abominable of creatures: Sin hides it self from the sinners eyes, and all its vilenesse and deformity; or if it come in sight, it presents it self to the sinner, as the Witch of *Endor* brought up the Devil before *Saul* in *Samuel's Mantle*: It shews it self as the sinners god: Look how many sins evil men have, so many gods have they rising up to them. Their sins are their gods; the gods that feed them, they make a living of their sins; the gods that comfort and refresh them, they take pleasure in iniquity; the gods that shelter them and hide them, they strengthen themselves in their wickedness: But now the Spirit of God plucks off the Mantle, and makes sin appear to be sin; makes all the sinners gods appear to be so many Devils: brings forth the blackness and filthiness of sin into sight, makes the sinner to see himself an unclean and abominable thing: And withall, he brings forth the guilt of sin, sets all these Devils a tormenting the sinner, filling him with fear, and terror, and amazement. In this respect he is called, *Rom. 8.* the Spirit of Bondage, that works fear and trouble in the heart: The Spirits awakening a sleepy sinner, is a kinde of awakening Hell. Lord, where am I? What mean these Legions round about me? These Chains and Fetters that are upon me? What means that black Roll before mine eyes, of curs-

ses, and Wrath, and Woes! Lord, where am I? Have I been playing, and sporting, and making merry, and my soul in such a case as this? But is there no hope of escaping out of this wretched state? I see there is no abiding thus, I am but a dead man if I continue as I am. What may I do to be saved?

And when he is brought to this, there is some way made for his entertainment of Christ: Yet this is not all that is needful, but we must further be brought to,

2. *An utter despair of himself, and all things else besides Christ.* Being made sensible of his sin and his danger, a finner will look out for help and deliverance; but he will look every where else, before he will look unto Christ: Nothing will bring in a sinner to Christ, but an absolute necessity. He will try to forsake his sins, will think of leaving his drunkennesse, and becoming sober; of leaving his adulteries, and becoming chaste, and so see if by this means he may not escape. He will go to Prayers, and Sermons, and Sacraments, and search out if there be not Salvation in them: but all these, though they be useful in their places, yet looking no further, the finner sees there's no help in them: His Righteousnesse cannot help him, this is but rags; his Duties cannot help him, these may be reckoned among his sins; Ordinances cannot help, these are but empty cisterns; and all tell him, You knock at a wrong door, salvation is not in us. Well, the Lord be merciful to me, saith the sinner, what shall I do? Abide as I am, I dare not, and how to help my self I know not, my praying will not help me, my hearing

ing will not help me ; if I give all my Goods to the Poor, if I should give my body to be burned, all this would not save my Soul : Wo is me, what shall I do, and whither shall I go ? And now, being brought to this distresse, to this utter losse, his despair drives him to the onely door of Hope, that is left open. Then Christ will be acceptable, when he sees none but Christ can stead him: The Apostle tells us, *Gal. 3. 23.* *We were kept under the Law (shut up unto the Faith) that should afterwards be revealed :* All other doors were shut up against us, there was no hope of escaping, but by that one door that was left open, *The Faith that was afterwards to be revealed.* As the besieged in a City, that have every Gate blocked up, and but one difficult passage left open, by which there is any possibility of escaping ; thither they throng for the saving of their lives ; they are shut up unto that door, to which (if there had been any other way open) they would never have come.

And as Christ will never be accepted, so can the sinner never be received of him, till he lets go all other props, and trusts on him alone. Christ will have no sharer with him in the work of saving Souls. *If ye seek me let these go their way :* as he said in another case, *Let not onely your sins go, but let your righteousness go, all the refuges of lies wherein you have trusted ; let all go if you will have me to be a Refuge to you.* I came not to call the Righteous : If I should, they would not come ; or if they come, let them go as they come, let them go to their righteousness in which they trust, and let naked
desirous

defitiate sinners, distressed sinners come to me, who am come to this end, to seek and to save them that are lost.

Sinners, Will you come now? Will you venture here? For this your adventuring on Christ, you have this threefold warrant:

1. Gods Ordination. This is he whom God the Father hath appointed, and sent into the world, to help and bring back his Exiles to himself, to save sinners. This is he whom God the Father hath sealed, *John 6. 27.* hath mark'd him out for that chosen person, in whom is salvation; hath seal'd him his Commission; for the Redeeming and Reconciling the World to himself. As God said unto the three friends of *Job*, when he was angry with them, *Job 42. 8.* Go to my servant *Job*, and be I shall offer sacrifice for you, be I shall pray for you, for him will I accept. So so sinners, God saith the Lord, to my servant *Jesus*, he shall offer sacrifice for you, he shall make reconciliation for you, *Isa. 42. 1.* Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2. Gods Command; *1 Joh. 3. 23.* This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son *Jesus Christ*.

3. The Promise of God; *1 Pet. 2. 6.* Behold, I lay in Sion a chief Corner-Stone, Elect, Precious; He that believeth on Him, shall not be confounded.

Now having this three-fold Warrant; The Warrant of God's Ordination, Command, and Promise; you may be bold to adventure on

Christ, and to apply your selves to him thus ; Lord Jesus , here I am a poor Captive Exile, a lost creature, an enemy to God, under his Wrath and Curse ; Wilt thou Lord undertake for me, Reconcile me to God, and save my Soul : Do not Lord refuse me , for if thou refuse me, to whom then shall I go ? Art not thou he, and he alone, whom God the Father hath sealed, the Saviour of sinners ? The Lord God hath sent me to thee, hath bid me come, he hath commanded me to believe, and cast my self upon thee. Lord Jesus, wilt thou refuse to help a distressed creature, whom the Father hath sent to thee for thy help ? If I had come on my own head ; or in mine own name, thou mightest well have put me back ; but since I come at the Command of the Father, reject me not ; Lord help me, Lord save me, Art thou not he, concerning whom the Father hath promised ; He that believeth on him, shall not be confounded ? I come Lord, I believe Lord, I throw my self upon thy Grace and Mercy ; I cast my self upon thy Blood and Bowels, do not refuse me, I have no whither else to go ; Here I'lle stay, I will not stir from thy door ; on thee I'lle trust, and rest, and venture my self ; God hath laid my help on thee, and on thee I'lle lay my hope, for Pardon, for Life, for Salvation ; If I perish, I'lle perish on thy shoulders : If I sink, I'lle sink in thy Vessel ; If I die, I'lle die at thy door ; bid me not go away, for away I will not go.

IV. *Resign, and deliver up your selves to God in Christ.*

2 Chron. 30. 8. *Yield your selves to the Lord ; that*

that is, as his servants, give up the Dominion and Government of your selves to Christ, Rom.

6.13. *Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield your selves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members, as instruments of righteousness unto God,* Verse 16. *To whom ye yield your selves servants to obey, his servants you are, to whom you obey:* Yield your selves so to the Lord, that you may henceforth be the Lords, *I am thine,* saith the Psalmist, *Psalm 119.* Those that yield, themselves to sin, and the world, their hearts say, *Sin, I am thine;* *World, I am thine;* *Riches, I am yours;* *Pleasures, I am yours:* *I am thine* saith the Psalmist; devoted to thy fear, dedicated to thy service: *I am thine, save me:* Give your selves to Christ sinners, be devoted to his fear.

And this giving your selves to him, must be such, as supposes that you be heartily contented:

1. That he appoint you your work.
2. That he appoint you your station.

1. That he appoint you your work; that he put you to whatsoever he pleaseth: servants, as they must doe their Masters work, so they must do that work which their Masters appoints them, they must be for any work their Master hath for them to do: they must not pick and chuse: this I will do, and that I will not do: they must not say, This is too hard, or this is too mean, or this may be well enough let alone: Good servants, when they have chosen their Master, will

let their Master chuse their work, and will not dispute his will, but do it.

Christ hath many services to be done, some are more easie and honourable, others more difficult and disgraceful; some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, others are contrary to both: In some we may please Christ, and please our selves, as when he requires us to feed and cloath our selves, to provide things honest for our own maintenance; yea, and there are some spiritual duties, that are more pleasing then others; as to rejoice in the Lord, to be blessing and praising of God, to be feeding our selves with the delights and comforts of Religion; these are the sweet works of a Christian. But then, there are other works, wherein we cannot please Christ, but by denying our selves; as giving and lending, bearing and forbearing, reproving men for their sins, withdrawing from their societies, witnessing against their wickedness, owning, and confessing Christ and his name, when 'twill cost us shame and reproach; sailing against the wind, swimming against the tide, steering contrary to the temper and disposition of the times; pinching upon the flesh, parting with our ease, our Liberties, Relations, and Accommodations for the Name of our Lord Jesus, with much work of this kind.

It's necessary beloved, to sit down and consider, what it will cost you, to be the servants of Christ, and take a through survey of the whole business of Christianity, and not engage hand over head to you know not what.

First, See whar 'tis that Christ doth expect, and then

then yield your selves to his whole will : Do not think of indenting and compounding , or making your own terms with Christ, that will never be allowed you.

Go to Christ, and tell him, Lord Jesus, if thou wilt receive me into thine house , if thou wilt but own me as thy servant, I wil not stand upon terms, impose on me what condition thou pleasest , write down thine own Articles, command me what thou wilt, put me to any thing thou seeest good ; let me come under thy Roof , let me be thy servant, and spare not to command me ; I will be no longer mine own , but give up my self to thy will in all things.

2. That he shall appoint you your station and condition ; whether it be higher , or lower , a plentiful , or a wanting , a prosperous , or an afflicted estate : be content , that Christ should both chuse your work, and chuse your conditi-on ; that he should have the command of you, and the disposal of you , make me what thou wilt , Lord , and set me where thou wilt : let me be a Vessel of Silver or Gold , or a Vessel of Wood or Stone , so I be a Vessel of Honour ; of whatever form or mettal , whether higher or lower , finer or courser , I am content : If I be not the head, or the eye , or the ear , one of the nobler and more honourable Instruments thou wilt employ , let me be the hand , or the foot , one of the most laborious, and lowest , and most contemptible of all the servants of my Lord , let my dwelling be on the dunghil , my portion in the Wilderness , my name and my lot be a-mongst the hewers of wood , or drawers of was-

per , among the door-keepers of thy house : any where , where I may be serviceable and usefull : I put my selfe wholly into thy hands : Put me to what thou wilt , rank me with whom thou wilt , put me to doing , put me to suffering , let me be imployed for thee , or laid aside for thee , exalted for thee , or trodden under feet for thee : let me be full , let me be empty , let me have all things , let me have nothing , I freely , and heartily , resign all to thy pleasure and disposal .

This now is your closing with Christ , as your King and Sovereign Lord : and in this is included , your renouncing the Devil and his works , the flesh and its lusts : together , with your consenting to all the Laws and Ordinances of Christ , and his Providential Government .

Beloved , such a close with Christ as you have been here exhorted to , is that : wherein the Essence of Christianity lies : when you have chosen the incorruptible Crown , that is , when you have chosen God to be your portion and happiness : when you have adventured , and laid up your whole interest , and all your hopes with Christ , casting your selves wholly upon the Merit of his Righteousness : when you have understandingly , and heartily resign'd , and given up your selves to him , resolving for ever to be at his command , and at his disposal : then you are Christians indeed , and never till then . Christ will be the Saviour of none but of his servants : He is the Author of Eternal Salvation , to those that obey him , Heb . 5 . Christ will have no servants but by consent : His people are a willing people , Psalm 110 . And Christ will accept of no consent

but

but in full, to all that he requires, he will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

V. Confirm and compleat all this by Solomon Covenant.

Give your selves to the Lord as his Servants, and bind your selves to him as his Covenant Servants, Jer. 30. 21. Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me : Isa. 44. 5. One shall say I am the Lord's ; another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord.

Upon your entring into Covenant with God, the Covenant of God stands firm to you ; God gives you leave, every man, to put in his own Name into the Covenant grant ; if it be not found there at last, it will be your own fault ; If it be not there, there will be nothing found in the whole Covenant belonging unto you ; If it be there, all is yours ; if you have come into the bond of the Covenant, you shall have your share in the blessings of the Covenant, Jer. 30. 21, 22. Who is this that engaged his heart to approach to me, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God ? Engage to me, and I stand engaged to you, Deut. 26. 17, 18. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his Statutes, and his Commandments, and his Judgements, to hearken to his Voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he bath promised thee. Observe it, The same day that they avouched the Lord to be their God, the same day the Lord avoucheth them to be his peculiar People : The same day that they engage to keep the

Commandments of God, the same day the Lord engageth to keep his Promise with them.

There is a Two-fold Covenanting with God, *In profession*, and *in Reality*: An Entering our *Names*, or an Engaing our *Hearts*: The former is done in *Baptism*, by all that are *baptized*, who by receiving that *Seal of the Covenant*, are visibly, or in *profession*, entred into it; The latter is also Two-fold:

3. *Virtual*. Which is done by all those that have sincerely made that closure with God in *Christ* foremention'd: Those that have chosen the Lord, embarked with *Christ*, resigned up, and given themselves to the Lord, are all engaged persons, and have virtually Covenanted with him.

2. *Formal*. Which is our binding our selves to the Lord by *solemn Vow* or *Promise*, to stand to our choice, &c. And this may be, Either only *inward* in the Soul; Or *outward*, and *expressed*, either by *words*, *lifting up of the hand*, *subscribing the hand*, or the like: And by how much the more *expresse* and *solemn* our Covenanting with God is, by so much the more *seasibly* and *strongly* is it like to hold our hearts to him.

Now that which I would perswade you to, is this *solemn* and *expresse* covenanting with God; Providence hath lately brought to my hand the Advice of a dear Friend, and faithful Labourer in the work of the Lord about this matter, toge-
ther

ther with an excellent Form of words, composed for the help of weaker Christians, and aptly accommodated to all the Substantials of our Baptismal Covenant; which having found great acceptance with many precious Christians, I do with much zeal, and great hope of good success, for the establishing of Souls in holiness, and comfort, commend it to the use, not only of young Converts, but of the more grown Christians, that have not experimented this or the like course.

And in order to the putting this matter into practise, I shall first give you these few Directions :

First, set apart some time, more then once, to be spent in secret before the Lord :

1. *In seeking earnestly his special assistance and gracious acceptance of you.*

2. *In considering distinctly all the terms or conditions of the Covenant, as they have been laid before you, in the Directions already given you, and are also expressed in the forms hereafter proposed.*

3. *In searching your hearts whether you either have already, or can now freely make such a closure with God in Christ, as you have been exhorted to. In special, Consider what your sins are, and examine whether you can resolve to forgo them all. Consider what the Laws of Christ are, how holy, strict and spiritual, and whether you can upon deliberation make choice of them all (even those that do most cross your worldly interests, beloved sins, and corrupt inclinations) as the rule of your whole life. Be sure you be clear in these matters, see that you*

do not lye unto God. Consider, whether however corruption will play its parts, and be putting you back, yet the prevailing part of you will be for God, and Christ, and all his holy ways.

Secondly, Compose your spirits into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance.

Thirdly, Lay hold on the Covenant of God, and rely upon his promise of giving grace, and strength, whereby you may be enabled to perform your promise. Trust not to your own strength, to the strength of your own resolutions, but take hold on his strength.

Fourthly, Resolve to be faithful. Having engaged your hearts, opened your mouths, and subscribed with your hands to the Lord, resolve in his strength never to go back.

Lastly, Being thus prepared, on some convenient time set apart for the purpose, set upon the work, and in the most solemn manner possible, as if the Lord were visibly present before your eyes, fall down on your knees, and spreading forth your hands towards Heaven, open your hearts to the Lord, in these or the like words.

O Most dreadful God, for the passion of thy Son, I beseech thee accept of thy poor Prodigal now prostrating himself at thy door; I have fallen from thee by mine iniquity, and am by nature a son of death, and a thousand-fold more the childe

child of Hell by my wicked practise ; but of thine infinite Grace thou hast promised mercy to me in Christ , if I will but turn to thee with all my heart : Therefore upon the Call of thy Gospel , I am now come in , and throwing down my weapons , submit my self to thy mercy .

The terms from which we must turn, are Sin. Satan, the World, and our own Righteousness, which must be thus renounced And because thou requirest , as the condition of my peace with thee , that I should put away mine Idols , and be at defiance with all thine enemies , which I acknowledge I have wickedly sinned with against thee , I hear from the bottom of my heart renounce them all ; firmly covenanting with thee , nor to allow my self in any known sin , but conscientiously to use all the means that I know thou hast prescribed , for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions ; And whereas I have formerly inordinately and idolatrously let out my affections upon the world , I do here resigne my heart to thee that madest it ; humbly protesting before thy glorious Majesty , that it is the firm resolution of my heart , and that I do

do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto I may practise this my resolution, through thy assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this world, rather then to turn from thee to the wayes of sin; and that I will watch against all its temptations, whether of prosperity or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from thee; beseeching thee also to help me against the temptations of Satan, to whose wicked suggestions, I resolve, by thy grace, never to yield my self a servant. And because my own righteousness is but menstruous rags, I renounce all confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of my self a hopeless, helpless, undone creature, without righteousness or strength.

The terms to which we must turn, are either ultimate or mediate.

And forasmuch as thou hast of thy bottomless mercy offered most graciously to me wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept of thee; I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I do here solemnly avouch thee for the

The ultimate is God, the Father, Son and holy Ghost, who must be thus accepted.

Lord my God; and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul

soul under the feet of thy most sacred Ma-
jesty, I do here take thee the Lord Je-
hovah, Father, Son, and holy Ghost,
for my portion and chief good; and
do give up my self, body and soul for thy
servant; promising and vowing to serve
thee in holiness and righteousness all the
dayes of my life.

The mediate terms,
are either principal
or less principal-

The principal is
Christ the Mediator
who must thus be
embraced.

And since thou hast
appointed the Lord Jesus
Christ, the only means of
coming unto thee, I do
here upon the bended
knees of my soul, accept
of him as the only new and living way, by
which sinners may have access to thee; and
do here solemnly joyn myself in a marri-
age Covenant to him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry
and hardly bestead, poor, and wretched,
and miserable, and blind, and naked; a
most loathsome polluted wretch, a guilty
condemned malefactor, unworthy for ever
to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord,
much more to be solemnly married to the
King of glory; but sith such is thine un-
paralleld love, I do here with all my power
accept thee, and do take thee for my head
and husband, for better for worse, for
richer

richer for poorer, for all times and condic-
tions, to love, and honour, and obey thee
before all others, and this to the death.
I embrace thee in all thine offices : I re-
nounce mine own worthiness, and do here
avow thee for the Lord my Righteousness ;
I renounce mine own wisdome, and doe
here take thee for mine onely Guide ; I re-
nounce mine own will, and take thy will
for my Law.

And since thou hast told me that I must
suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant
with thee to take my lot, as it falls, with
thee, and by thy grace assisting to run all
hazzards with thee, verrily purposing, that
neither life nor death shall part between
thee and me.

The leſſe p'inci-
p'la e. The Laws
of Christ, which
must be thus ob-
ſerved,

And because thou hast
been pleased to give me thy
holy Laws, as the rule of
my life, and the way in
which I ſhould walk to thy
Kingdome ; I doe here willingly put my
neck under thy yoak, and ſett my ſhoul-
der to thy burden, and ſubſcribing to all
thy Laws, as holy, just and good ; I ſo-
lemnly take them, as the rule of my words,
thoughts, and actions ; promising, that
though my flesh contradict and rebell, yet

I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to thy direction ; and will not allow my self in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Only because through the frailty of my flesh, I am subject to many failings ; I am bold humbly to protest, That unallow-ed miscarriages, contrary to the settled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this Covenant ; for so thou hast said.

Now Almighty God, searcher of hearts, thou knowest that I make this Covenant with thee this day, without any known guile or reservation, beseeching thee, that if thou espiest any flaw or falsehood therein, thou wouldest discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

And now glory be to thee, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward, to look upon as my God and Father ; That ever thou shouldest find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners ; Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in thine own blood, and art now become my Saviour and Redeemer ; Glory be to thee, O God the holy Ghost, who by the finger of thine

*Thine Almighty power, hast turned about
my heart from sin to God.*

*O dreadful Jehovah, the Lord God om-
nipotent, Father, Son and holy Ghost, thou
art now become my Covenant friend; and
I through thine infinite grace, am become
thy Covenant servant; Amen, so be it: And
the Covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in Heaven.*

The Author's Advice.

THIS Covenant I advise you to make, not only in heart but in word, not only in word but in writing; and that you would with all possible reverence spread the writing before the Lord, as if you would present it to him as your act and deed: And when you have done this, set your hand to it; Keep it as a memorial of the solemn transactions that have passed between God and you, that you may have recourse to it in doubts and temptations.

And now Beloved, having shewed you the way to the Father, give me leave to be instant with you

you; in pressing you to hearken to me herein; to come and joyn your selves thus to the Lord. And if you will not be perswaded, to this solemn and express away of Covenanting with him, (which I believe you will find a great advantage, and do therefore make it my great request unto you) yet, if you will not do that, take heed you refuse not to engage your hearts to the Lord; and make a full closure with Christ, upon all the particular terms laid before you; till that be done, I must be bold to tell you again, as I have told you already, that you are short of Christianity, strangers from the Covenant of Promise, and Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Israel*.

Brethren, the Lord God hath sent me amongst you upon the same Errand, as *Abraham* sent his servant, Gen. 24. *To take a wife for his Son, to spouse you to Christ:* I am not without fear, as that servant was not, that some of you will not follow me; but if the Lord see it good, to send his Angel before me, to make my way prosperous. If the Lord give me success in this great thing, that I may thus bring you into Covenant with him, I shall therein have performed the main part of my Ministerial work among you; I shall have espoused you to Christ; Married you to this one Husband; I shall have brought you within the strait gate, and set your foot safe into that narrow way that leads to life, and have laid the foundation of your following the Lord in holiness and comfort here, and of living with him in blessedness for ever. For

1. When once you are sincerely in Covenant,

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from

from thenceforth you have a God that you may call your own, to whom you may have free access, with whom you may be sure to find grace, to help in all times of need. How blessed is his condition, who is able to say, I have no friend in the world, but I have a God in Heaven; I have many Enemies, but I have a God; I have no house, nor money, nor lands, but I have a God; I have troubles, I have sins that are a daily torment and vexation to me, but I have a God, a God to feed me, a God to succour me, a God to shelter me, a God to pardon me, a God to sanctifie me, to save me.

2. From the time of this your Covenant Union with Christ, you have the blessing of Communion with him, and his blood. I Cor. 10. 18.

3.1. Whatsoever is Christ's, is now become yours; the Husband gives the Wife leave to set her Name on all his goods, and all that Christ hath, you may now write your name upon it, and say boldly, All this is mine; his Prayers, his Tears, his Obedience, his Blood, his Spirit, all are mine, because he is mine.

3.2. Whatsoever is yours, is his; your sufferings, your sinnes, your debts, your wants are all upon your Husband: Christ says to you, as the Old man, Judges 19. 20. to the Levite, Let all thy wants be on me, and so all thy Debts, and Scares, and Fears, and Troubles, let them all be on me.

3.3. Christ and you shall have your Lot together. God deals with Christ and a Believer, as one and the same party; who must be absolved or condemned, stand or fall, live or die together.

In Christ's being justified, your Justification is secured; in Christ's Resurrection, your Resurrection, in Christ's Glorification, your Glorification is secured for ever; *Because I live, ye shall live also.* This is the portion, this is the Inheritance of all God's Covenanting-Servants.

You that are yet in your sins, in your old Covenant with Death, and agreement with Hell; Will you yet be persuaded by what hath been said, to say one to another, *Come, let us break these bonds asunder, and cast these cords from us; come, let us go over to Christ, let us joyn our selves; to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant that never shall be forgotten.*

You that are sincerely, come within the bonds of this Covenant of the Lord; the Lord is henceforth become your God, Christ is henceforth become your Saviour, you have shot the Gulf; that good work is begun, which the Lord will perform to the day of Christ; you are gotten within the Gate, you are entered into the Path of Life.

2. In the next place therefore, I shall give some advise to the godly, or those that are already in Christ, whom I shall direct:

1. To a right performance of holy duties, these four duties especially, Prayer, holy Meditation, Self-examination, and renewing their Covenant.

2. To a right improvement of holy Duties.

3. To the carrying on an holy Course.

In all which, though I shall apply my self especially to those that are in Christ, yet I shall also

also give some farther helps to those that are yet out of Christ.

Before I shall enter upon the directions, for the right performance of holy duties, it will not I hope, be lost labour, if I prefix a word of encouragement to duty, by laying before you the influences, which hold duties will have, upon the carrying on an holy life, which I shall dispatch in these four particulars.

1. *Duties are the exercise of Grace.* Grace out of exercise grows quickly out of case; Idleness breeds ill humours and diseases in the body, and no less in the soul; stirring keeps us warm and healthful; now Duties are the stirrings and exercises of the soul; Reading of the Word is not the exercise of the eye only, but of the understanding; Prayer is not an exercise of the tongue only, but of the heart; it sets all the faculties of the soul on work, it sets the several graces on work, it sets faith on work; it sets hope and holy desires on work; and grace kept in action, will be by so much the more active and powerful in the whole course.

2. *In duties we have an intimate converse with God.* Therefore they are sometimes called, *Our drawing nigh to God*; Lev. 10. 3. *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.* Sometimes, *Our meeting with God*; Amos 4. 12. *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel;* to meet him with a *Present*, as *Jacob* met his angry brother; to meet him with a *Prayer*, and *Supplication*, Exod. 25. 32. *There will I meet thee;* when the *Saints* go up to meet the *Lord*; the *Lord* comes down to give them a meeting; Sometimes, *Our visiting of God*, Isa.

26. 16. *In their trouble they have visited thee ; When God visits his People with a Rod, they visit him with a Prayer ; when we come to Duty as we ought, we put our selves under Gods Eye, we set the Lord before our face ; It's necessary to the right performance of Duties, that we have right and clear apprehensions of God, deep impressions of the Majesty of God, of his Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Holiness, Goodness and Faithfulness upon our hearts ; This is required, in that fore-mentioned expression, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me. Now what an influence will this have upon the upholding and carrying on the Life of God in us, to have daily such a sight of God before our eyes, and such a sense of God upon our hearts.*

3. *In Duties we obtain new supplies, and fresh influences from God. The flourishing state of a Christian is set forth, Isa. 58. 11. by a well-watered Garden ; and Jer. 31. 12. It's promised, They shall come and flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for Wheat, and for Corn, and for Wine, and for Oyl. And their Soul shall be as a well-watered Garden : Where observe these three things ;*

1. That the watering of the Soul, is from the goodness of the Lord ; all the dews and showers of Grace are from Above, our Springs do not rise in our own Gardens ; *All my springs are in thee.*

2. All the influences of the grace and goodness of the Lord, are gotten down by due applying our selves to him in duty ; That's the meaning of that expression, *They shall flow together to the goodness*

ness of the Lord, they shall assemble and come together to seek the Lord.

3. The People of God, in their addresses to him in Duty, though it be but for a supply of things Temporal, do get something for their Souls; *They shall come for Wheat, and for Wine, &c. And their (Souls) shall be as a well-watered Garden.* We never come to pray for any Temporal Mercy, and pray as we should, but our Souls are gainers thereby. A Christian cannot come neer the Throne of Grace for any thing, but his heart hath a share in the Blessing. And there are three Reasons for it.

1. A Christian never prayes for Temporal Mercies, but he hath some word or other to speak for his Soul.

2. Prayer, whatever it be for, is the Soul's drawing nigh to God, and exercising it self on God; And the Soul never goes to God, but it brings back something of God upon it, even then when it may be denied the Temporal Mercy it seeks: As when a Saint is praying for a Sinner, and God will not hear him for that Sinner, yet he loses not that prayer, but hath it returned into his own bosom; So when the Soul is praying for the concerns of the outward man, though it be denied in its particular request, yet its prayer shall not be lost to it self.

3. Temporal Mercies obtained as a return of Prayer, are Soul-blessings.

But now when the matter of our requests is particularly for our Souls; When Grace is that we come for; when Love, and Life, and Zeal, and Spiritual Strength, is that we come for; when

the

the watering of a dry and barren, and the refreshing of a weary heart, is that we seek for, shall our souls then be sent barren, and weary, and empty away ?

Our hearts are as Cisterns, which how ever sometimes they may be full of water, yet if there be not a supply from the Well, the waters of the Cistern will waste, and mud, and at length dry away. Duties are our *labouring at the Pump*, which will keep the Cisterns full, *Isaiah 12. 3.* *Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the Wells of Salvation.*

Christian, thou complainest thy heart is barren, and dead, and dry, and fit for nothing : Why, is there not a Well by thee, where there is water enough to refresh and fill thee ? Why dost thou no oftner let down thy pitcher, or labour at the *Pump*, why art thou no oftner with thy God ? Thy heart wants watering, get thee oftner to the Well ; more praying, more fasting, more conversing with Christ, studying the *Gospel*, searching and sucking the Promises, would quickly get thee into a better plight. He that's much with God, is rich in Grace. Thou art not so much straitned, thou canst not be brought so poor and lean, and out of case, but thou knowest where there is enough to fetch thee up again, thou knowest where there is a Well, that hath not onely water enough, healing water, but Wine, and Milk, and Honey enough ; but thou must go oftner for it, if thou wilt have the benefit of it ; Go therefore, and let down thy Pitcher, and thou needst not fear it's coming up empty. Only in exercising thy self in duty, take heed thou

mistake not the Pitcher for the Well; take heed thou fix not thine eye on duty, as if this were thy Christ, thy fountain out of which thou maiest be supplied; Duties are but the pipes, 'tis the Lord that is the Fountain from whence all the water comes.

4. *Duties are our confilcing with corruption, or striving against sinne.* When ever we are striving with God, we are thereby striving against sinne. Duty and sin contend for the victory; whilst duty holds up, sin goes down, when duty flags, sin gets up. Holy prayer will make us weary of iniquity; or our iniquity will quickly make such praying a weariness unto us; it is not for the interest of the flesh, to suffer the heart to be much in prayer, or other duties; and therefore we find for the whole Generation of carnal men, a little of it must serve their turn.

There is no such way for Christians, to be revenged on sinne, and to see their desires upon this Enemy, as to bring it before the Lord; They never fight against it with greater zeal, or with more successse, then upon their knees: When the sinner kneels in earnest before his God, his lusts must quickly kneel to him; our confession of sinne, and laying it open before the Lord, our complaining to the Lord of it, our crying to the Lord against it, pressing him upon his Promise, upon his Covenant to help against it; these are the mightiest batteries our Souls can make, to the beating down it's strong holds: When the Lord hears the groanings of his *Israel*, under their oppressing *Egyptians*, he will arise and relieve them. Christians, tell one another,

how

how sad it is with them, what woful work they have with a proud heart, or a covetous heart, or an hard heart, or hypocritical heart ; and you may tell one another such sad stories long enough, and find little help : Go tell thy God of thy sins, carry them before the Throne of Grace, make thy complaints against them there, and there thou wilt find compassion and deliverance.

Now gather up these four particulars together, consider them well, and then you will see, you that intend holiness in earnest, what great reason you have to set close in with duties, and to accept of those directions which shall now be tendred unto you.

The first sort of Directions are such as concern the right performance of the duty of Prayer ; the advice I shall give you touching this take in these four particulars.

1. Bring your selves, and hold your selves to a frequent and constant performance of this duty.

There must be performance, or there cannot be a right performance : Those that pray not, or but seldom, it is a shrewd sign that the root of the matter is not in them ; they that can live without Prayer are dead whilst they are alive : Prayer is the first Fruits of Christianity : it was said of *Saul*, as a token that he was a Convert, *Behold he prayeth*. The living Childe comes crying into the world ; and as it is a token of Life, so it is a means by which this new Life is nourished : Prayer is a Christians Key to unlock the Store-houses, and the Treasuries of Souls : he that can pray, God hath given him a key to all his

his Treasuries; Prayer will not only unlock the clouds; as *Elijah's* prayer did, and bring down rain to refresh the dry and parched earth, but it will unlock Heaven too: It will unlock the Ark, and the Mercy-Seat, and get down spiritual blessings on the Soul: Praying is a Christians knocking at the Gate of Heaven, that knocking to which the Promise is made, *Matth. 7. 7 Knock and it shall be opened.* The word which the Lord speaks to us is Gods knocking at our doors; *Revel. 3. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock.* And praying is our knocking at the Lords door, at the Gate of Heaven, that this may be opened. By the way learn, that if you will not hear Gods knock, it is just he hear not yours; If Gods Voice may not be heard on Earth, your voice will not be heard in Heaven; fear not, you shall be heard if you will hear: Hear him that speaks to you from Heaven, and your cry shall enter into Heaven.

Our Souls will never thrive or flourish, unlesse the rain and the showers of heavenly Grace descend and fall upon them; and we cannot look that those showers should come down, unlesse we look up.

Persons that Pray not, may be written among the Heathens, *Jer. 10. 25 Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen, and the Families that call not on thy Name:* Among the prophane ones of the earth, who are described by this Character, *Psal. 24. 4 They call not upon God; they are altogether become filthy and abominable, there is none that doth good, they call not upon God.*

Where Prayer is not, there is usually cursing, and

and swearing, and every abomination ; look upon the non-praying Persons, look upon the non-praying Families among you, and see how little good there is to be found ; see if they be not as so many dead and dry Trees, on which no Spiritual fruit appears, as so many dark holes, into which no Spiritual Light doth ever shine, as so many filthy sinks, in which every vile thing lodges.

Beloved, I have often pressed this duty on you, both *Personal secret Prayer*, that there be not one Person found among you that prayes not : and *Family joyn't Prayer*, that there be not one Family found among you, among whom God is not thus Worshipped : I have often pressed this upon you, and given you particular helps and directions about it, and have not been negligent to put you in remembrance of it ; so that if there be Prayerlesse Persons or Families found among you, the guilt of it must lie at your own doors. *

But will you yet hearken to me in this thing ? will you give your selves to prayer ? No word that is spoken to you, for the good of your souls, will ever prosper with you, if this Word prosper not ; it is vain for me to perswade you to live a Godly Life, if you will not be perswaded to live a Praying Life. Would you ever come to any thing, see then that this Exhortation do not come to nothing, Be ye therefore serious, Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer, 1 Pet. 4. 7. Be ye instant, be constant in Prayer ; set up your Resolutions, and set your time ; set your times, and keep your times ; do not put off this duty,

duty, by pretending you pray alwayes, every day, and every hour ; as the pretence of an every dayes Sabbath comes just to no Sabbath : so it is usually in the case of prayer; some carnal wretches praying alwayes is not praying at all : *Get thee into thy Closet*, saith Christ, *get thee a place, set thee a time, wherein thou mayest vacare Deo*, wherein thou mayest make it thy businesse to seek the Lord.

Brethren, I say again, If you will not suffer me to prevail with you in this thing, I may even spare my labour of speaking any other things to you, wherein I shall have no hope of successe, if I speed not here : Some among you, in some private Conferences I have had with you, have given me some good hopes of the work of Grace begun upon your hearts ; but when upon a further enquiry I have found that there hath been still a neglect of daily prayer ; this hath struck such a damp upon my Spirit, as hath brought down those hopes to be even almost as low as nothing ; and by experience I have found, that such persons, as upon advice and warning would not afterwards be brought to the constant exercise of this duty, if they have retained any favour of Religion at all, have yet from year to year been at a stand, and not the least sign of an improvement hath been to be seen. If ever therefore you will hearken to me in any thing that I tender for your Souls good, deny me not in this ; set upon the daily exercise of secret prayer ; and if you be resolved on the performance, I shall then be encouraged in the next place to help you on in the right performance. Therefore,

2. Come to pray with an actual and great expectation of obtaining help and grace from God.

Do not barely impose this duty upon you, as your task, but excite and encourage your selves to it, by looking for a return; think what it is that you would have, and look to receive it: The reason why we obtain no more in prayer, is, because we expect no more: God usually answers us according to our own hearts: Narrow hearts, and low expectations, have usually as little as they look for or desire: Large expectations are ordinarily answered with large returns: Expectation will put life into action; you will then pray with most enlarged hearts, when you are most full of hopes, the reward that is looked for in the evening will much encourage and quicken the labour of the day; fear not to expect too much from Heaven: Be not straitned in your own bowels, and you shall not be straitned in the God of bowels: Open thy mouth wide and he will fill it: God will never upbraid his beggars for looking for too great an Almes; he hath enough to supply them, and he hath a heart to bestow it: God will never say to you, *You are too bold, you ask too much; too much Grace, too much Holiness, why cannot less content you?* God hath given you commission to ask what you will, not to the one half, but the whole of his Kingdom; the Kingdom you shall have, if no less will serve your turn.

Christians be thankful for every little you receive, but look for much; be thankful for every little, every little received from God is much: A drop from that Fountain is worth

the

the world ; yet content not your selves with some drops, when, if you will, the Fountain may be yours. The King of Glory loves to give like a King, and will never say, *This is too much, either for a King to give, or a beggar to receive.* Since he hath given you leave, spare not to speak in large your desires, and let your eye be as big as your belly : God hath promised you, & therefore you may promise your selves ; whatever you ask (that is good for you) you shall not ask in vain. Oh, if we had so much in our eye when we come before the Throne of Grace, we should be oftner there, and yet still return with our Load : Well Christians, remember this when ever you come to beg, look to receive ; come not to prayer as to a dry breast that is like to yield no milk, or to an empty cistern that will yield no water.

3. *Learn the skill to plead with God in Prayer.*

Though the breasts be full, yet they must be drawn hard ere the milk will come : Though the Lord be willing to give those that ask, yet he will have them first to prove they are in earnest. Store of Arguments he hath furnished us with, to press him withal, but he will have us use them : We must strive with God if we will prevail, and the best striving is with his own Weapons. The Counsel I give you in this, is, Plead hard with God, but plead with him upon his own Arguments : There are amongst many others these four grounds on which to bottom your Plea :

1. On God himself.

2. On Christ.

3. On the Promises.

4. On Experiences.

1. On

1. Oh God himself. And there are two special things, from which you may plead here.

1. *His gracious Nature.* Fetch your Arguments by which you plead with God for Mercy thence, whence he Originally fetched his Arguments to perswade himself to shew Mercy; from his own bowels, from his gracious nature, from his natural goodnessse and gracious inclination to Mercy, *Joh. 3.13.* God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, &c. *Ephes. 1. 5. to v. 10.* Having predestinated us to the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ unto himself, (according to the good pleasure of his Will) to the praise of the glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the forgiuenesse of sinnes, (according to the riches of his Grace) wherein he hath (abounded) towards us, in all Wisedome and Prudence; having made known unto us the Mystery of his Will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. Here we have heaped up a few words, the riches of Mercy which God hath bestowed on his people. Christ his Beloved, Redemption through Christ, and the forgiueness of our sinnes; the adoption of Children, acceptance in his sight, the revelation of the Mystery of his Will, or the discovering or making known these glorious Mercies to us. But whence is all this, who was it, or what was it, that perswaded the Lord to this abundant kindness? Why all this arose from himself; *He purposed it in himself.* He consulted no other Argument, but what he found in his own heart: It was from his love, the good pleasure of his Will, his Grace, the Riches of his Grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us,

Hosea

Hosea 1.8, 9. *How shall I give thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee up Israel? I cannot do it, I will not do it. I will not execute the fiercenesse of mine anger, I will not destroy Ephraim.* But why wilt thou not be angry, Lord, why wilt thou not destroy Ephraim? Oh, says the Lord, mine heart is turned within me; my heart saves, Spare him; my bowels say, Destroy him not. *I am God, and not Man.* I love him, and my love is the Love of a God. I have compassion on him, and my compassion is the pity of a God; I will bear with him, I am a God of Patience; Love is my nature, Pity, and Mercy, and Compassion are my nature; I cannot destroy Ephraim, but I must deny mine own nature. Love, and Pity, and Mercy, and Goodness are essential to God; He can as soon cease to be God, as to be Gracious; and this is the Fountain of all our Mercy; Hence Christ sprung, hence the Gospel came, and all the unsearchable Riches of Mercy, prepared for poor, lost and undone Creatures.

When you come to pray, fetch your Arguments hence: Plead with the Lord upon his own nature, his natural Love, Grace, and Goodness. Thus we find the Apostle Peter praying for the Christians to whom he wrote, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *[The God of all Grace] make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.* Plead with the Lord in your Prayers, as the Psalmist pleads with himself in his Affliction, Psalm 77. 7, &c. *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever, hath God forgotten to be gracious, hath he in anger shut up his tender Mercies? Is (his) Mercy clean gone? Hath (God) forgotten*

to be gracious? That men should be merciless, that men should forget themselves, and their Friends, in their low Estate, is no such wonder: But hath God, who is all Grace, all Mercy, all Pitty, hath God forgotten? Doth Mercy cease to be merciful, Grace cease to be gracious, do Compassions cease to be pitiful? Hath God not only forgotten his servant, but forgotten himself? Remember thy self, Lord, thine own Heart, thine own Soul, and according to it, remember me.

2. *His glorious Name.* The Lord's Nature is to be Gracious, and according to his Nature such is his Name, Exod. 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.* This is an Argument that the Lord puts into the mouths of his People, telling them, Ezek. 36. 21, 22. *I had pity for my Holy Name; this I do not for your sakes, but for my holy Name's sake.* And upon this we find him frequently pleading with him, Psalm 31. 3. *For thy Name sake, lead me and guide me.* Jer. 14. 21. *Do not abhor us for thy Name sake, do not disgrace the Throne of thy Glory; remember, break not thy Covenant with us.* Go you and do likewise.

2. *On Christ.* And there are four things from which you may plead with God upon this account.

1. *The Lord's giving of Christ to you as your Lord, and your Saviour.* Upon which gift, you may call him your own.

2. *The Purchase of Christ;* who hath bought from the hands of the Father, all that you stand

in need of: He hath bought your *Lives*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *Ye are bought with a price*; He hath bought you a *Livelihood*, hath purchased an *Inheritance* and *Possession* for you, 1 Pet. 1.

3. *The Interest that Christ hath in the Father*; being the Son of God, the Son of his Love, the Servant of God, in whom his Soul delights, Isa. 42. 1. *Behold my servant whom I have chosen, mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth*, whose Name is so precious and powerful with the Father, that it will carry any suit, obtain any request, John 16. 23. *Whatever you ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you*.

4. *The interest that you have in Christ*. As he is precious to his Father, so you are precious to him; as the Father can deny him nothing, so he can deny his nothing, John 14. 13. *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my Name, I will do it*. He gives you Commission to put his Name upon all your requests, and whatsoever prayer comes up with this Name upon it, he will procure it an answer.

Now when you are praying for any mercy, especially for any Soul Mercy, make use of all these arguments; Lord, hast thou given Christ unto me, and wilt thou not with him give me all things I stand in need of? Hast thou given me the Fountaine, and wilt thou deny me the stream? When I beg pardon of sinne, when I beg power against sinne, when I beg holiness, &c.. Is not all this granted me, in thy gift of Christ to me? Is Christ mine, and is not his blood mine, to procure my pardon, his Spirit mine, to subdue mine iniquities? Are these mine, and wilt thou

thou with-hold them from me? Oh shall this guilt lye upon me, these sins live in me, these lusts rule over me, when by giving me in hand that whereof thou hast already given me a grant, all this would be removed from me? Look upon Christ, Lord; Thou hast said to me, *Look unto Jesus*, and give thy servant leave to say the same to thee, *Look thou upon Jesus*, and give out to me, what thou hast given me, in giving of him to me. Look upon the purchase of Christ; Do I want any thing, or desire any thing, but what my Lord hath bought and paid for, and thou hast accepted of the price? Look upon the Name of Christ, which thou mayst behold written upon every prayer I make; Though thou mayest say, *for thy own sake thou shalt have nothing, not a drop, not a crumb, yet wilt thou say, nor for his Name sake neither?* Is not that Name still a mighty Name, a precious Name before the Lord, &c. By these hints you may learn, how to plead with God from any other arguments, drawn from his promises, your experiences, &c.

Ques. But of what use is this our pleading with God, and in what stead doth it stand us in order to our prevailing with him?

Ans. 1. It is not of use to change the purpose of God, to prevail with him to do that for us which before he resolved not to do, but to bring forth his purposes into performance. We may say concerning the purposes of God, what himself sayes concerning the accomplishing of his Promises, Ezek. 36. 37. *Yet will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do this for them.* Such

praying fetches out those mercies which were in the heart of God, and puts them into our hand.

2. By pleading with God for audience, we plead our selves into credence, or the more firm belief that the Lord accepts and will answer. And if by all these arguments, we can plead our selves into a stronger faith, our faith will certainly bring us down a fuller answer.

Q. 2. These Arguments the Saints may use in Prayer; but is there no plea for poor natural men, that are yet in their sins, to make use of? What may they say for themselves, when they come before the Lord? Have you never a word to put in their mouths? They have more need of arguments then any; What shall they say?

Ans. 1. I shall premise, That it's the duty of meer natural men to pray; For, 1. Prayer is a part of God's Natural Worship. If there were no positive Law requiring it, yet the Law of Nature enjoyns it, and no man is exempted from the obligation of the Law of Nature. 2. Otherwise it were none of their sin to neglect and restrain Prayer; where no Law is, there is no Transgression. Now we find in Scripture, that neglect of prayer is reckoned up amongst wicked mens sins, Psa. 14. 3, 4. *They are altogether become filthy, &c. they call not upon God.* Sin, though it doth disable, yet it doth not disoblige to Duty.

Object. That which is usually objected against this, is, *God beareth not sinners; The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord:* Now, no man is bound to offer up to God an abominable thing; better offer up nothing then an abomination.

Sol.

Sol. In answer to this, consider, There are two sorts of finners, *Resolved finners*, and *Returning finners*; and accordingly there are two sorts of Prayers made by finners, 1. *Dissembling prayers*, mocking and lying prayers, *Hot. 11. 12. Ephraim compasseth me about with lyes*; lying *Sacrifices*, lying Devotions; makes as if he had a mind to know me, and serve me, when it is not in his heart; and such prayers are made use of, either as a vail to hide and cover their wickednesse, and to make them appear to men to be righteous, or else as an *engine or device* to quiet and pacifie their consciences in a course of finne. They make confessing of sin, to serve instead of forsaking of finne, praying, to serve instead of repenting; their prayers help them to finne the more freely; they think they may go out with any thing; if when they have done iniquity, they do but pray for forgiveness; Such prayers are an abomination to God, and a desolation to finners. *Bring no more vain Oblations, incense is an abomination to me*; Sinners, not only your wickednes, but your very prayers will undo you. If you make them a shelter for sin, your very prayers will be turned into sin.

2. *Returning prayers.* When a sinner, being struck with a sense of his finne, and of his necessity of changing his way, and of his utter inability to turn of himself, under the fears and troubles of his heart, goes to God and crys out, Lord, what shall I do? I see I am in an evil case, my soul is running on in finne, and thy curse and wrath I behold running on upon me; Lord save me, Lord help me, Lord pardon, Lord convert

me, break me off from my sins, break me off - from my sinful companions; I cannot get loose, my heart is too hard, my lusts are too strong, my temptations are too many for me to overcome of my self; Lord help me, turn me and I shall be turned, pluck my foot out of the snare, that I be not utterly destroyed; forgive mine iniquity, make me a clean heart, make me thy childe, make me thy servant; that I may never again yield up my self a servant to sin; Such a Prayer as this, if it be hearty and in earnest; if there be no promise of audience, yet at least there is an half promise; *Who can tell?* or, it may be the Lord may hear. Though it cannot be properly said, the Lord doth accept, neither can any man say, he will reject it as an abominable thing. This being premised.

2. I answer to the question, That sinners, if they have but an heart to it, have also a price in their hands; God hath put arguments into their mouths also, to plead with him for mercie. As,

1. *The Grace of God, or his gracious Nature;* his readiness to shew mercy; this even strangers may lay hold upon. *Benhadad's encouragement to beg his life of the King of Israel,* may be the sinners plea in begging of his. *We have heard that the Kings of Israel are merciful Kings;* Go sinner to the Lord, and speak thus in his ears; Lord I have heard that *the King of Glory is a merciful King;* thy name is the Lord, merciful and gracious, and thy Nature is according to thy Name; It is thy Nature to pity, and in thy heart there is plenteous compassion; Oh, I am

am a miserable creature, a poor, undone, helpless wretch; do for me according to thy Nature, do for me according to thy Name, will the God of Mercy send away such a wretch that comes for mercy; will the God of Mercy send me away without grace? The God of Mercy hear me, the God of Grace grant me to find grace in his eyes.

2. *God's Call, or gracious Invitation, Isa. 55.*
Ho (every one) that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that bath no money; come ye, buy and eat; buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Rise sinner, he calleth thee; Go to the Lord, and when thou goest, tell him, Lord thou hast bid me come, and behold here I am; I come Lord at thy word, I come for a little water, I come for thy wine and thy milk, I have brought no price in my hand, but thou hast bid me come and buy without money and without price. Though I have no grace, yet behold at thy word I come for grace, though I have no Christ, yet I come for Christ, though I can't call thee Father, yet being called, I come to thee as Fatherless; With thee the fatherless shall find mercy. And is it only those that want the Fathers of their flesh, is it only also those that want the Father of Spirits? Shall earthly Orphans find pity, and onely spiritual Orphans be left Orphans? If I am not thy child, may I not be made thy Child? Hast thou not a childs blessing left yet to bestow upon me? Thou hast bid me come, come for a blessing,

bless me, even me also, O Lord. Wherefore hast thou sent for me? Shall I be sent away as I came? I come at thy word, do not say again be gone, be gone out of my sight, I cannot go at thy word, I will not go; for, whither shall I go from thee? Thou hast the words of Eternal life. Since thou wilt have me speak, Lord answer; Though I dare not say, Be just to me a Saint, yet I do say, I will say, I must say; Lord be merciful to be a sinner.

3. Christ. And there are two things in Christ, upon which sinners may plead with God.

1. His sufficiency. There is enough in Christ, in his obedience and death, to save the worst of sinners, to save the whole world of Sinners. There is a fulness in Christ, Col. 10.19. *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.* There is a fulness of Merit to obtain pardon, to make reconciliation for whoever comes; a fulness of the Spirit to sanctifie, and cleanse them from their sins; *He's able to save unto the uttermost, all those that come unto God by him.* From this, sinners may reason thus with the Lord. O Lord, I do not come to beg that of thee that cannot be had; Thou hast enough by thee; Look upon Jesus that sits at thy right hand, is there not righteousness enough in him, to answer for all my unrighteousness? Are there not riches enough in him, to supply my poverty? Oh, shall I die for want of a pardon, when there is such bloud continually before thee, pleading for pardon! Oh, shall I lie down in my own vomit, and wallow in the mire of my filthy lusts, when there is such a fountain by thee, that's still open

open for sin and for uncleanness ! Oh sprink'le me with this blood : Oh wash me in this fountain. Hear Lord, send me not away without an Almes, when thou hast it by thee.

2. *His Office* : which is to bring sinners to God, to make reconciliation for sinners, to make intercession for transgressors, Isaiah 53. Psal. 68. 18. Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious also. What a strange and mighty plea is here for poor sinners ! Oh, it is true Lord, I am a Transgressor, and have been from the womb ; I have played the Traytor, and been a Rebel against thee all my dayes : But is there none in Heaven that will intercede for a Transgressor ? Hath the Lord Jesus received no gift for this poor Rebel, that falls down before thee ? Though I am a Rebel, Lord, yet I am a returning Rebel : Though I am a Rebel, yet let me receive a Rebels gift, not a Rebels reward, Lord, that would be dreadful ; but some of those gifts which Christ received for the rebellious. Doth Christ make intercession for Transgressors, and shall not he be heard ? If thou wilt not hear me who am a sinner, yet wilt thou not hear him that speaks for sinners, whose blood speaks, whose bowels speak, whose spirit speaks ? Doth he speak for sinners, and yet not for me ?

4. *Their own necessity* : Sinners are necessitous creatures, they have nothing of value left them, In the fulness of their sufficiency they are in straits : As a sinner of a hundred years is but a child, so a sinner of thousands by the year is but a beggar ; poor, miserable, blind and naked : He can want nothing, and yet doth want every thing that

that is good: Sin hath stript him to the skin; stab'd him to the heart, the iron hath entred into his soul, it hath left him nothing but wounds, and bruisers, and putrifying sores: Is this thy case, sinner, and hast thou nothing to say? Spread thy wants and necessities before the Lord, and let these speak for thee: Learn of beggars that come to thy door, who if they have ever a sore or malady about them, a blind eye, a lame leg, a burnt hand, a broken arm, that they will be sure to open, to move pity, and to procure an Alms. Their pinching hunger, their parching thirst, their naked backs their cold lodging, thy door shall be sure to ring of: Never a penny in my purse, never a morsel of bread have I nad for this long time; their necessity will make both them to speak, and help them to speed.

Sinner, spread thy necessities before the Lord, spread thy wants, open thy wounds and thy sores, till him how desperately sad thy case is, tell him of the guilt that is upon thy head, the curse that is on thy back, the plague that is in thy heart: God of bowels look hither, behold what a poor, blind, dead, hardned, unclean, guilty creature; what a naked, empty, helpless creature I am: Look upon my sin and my misery, and let thine eye affect thine heart: *One deep calls to another*, a deep of misery cries out to a deep of mercy. Oh my very sins, which cry so loud against me, speak also for me. My misery speaks, my curses, the wo and the wrath that lie upon me? my bones speak, my perishing soul speaks, and all cry in thine ears, Help Lord, God of pity help, help and heal me, help and save me: *Come unto me for I am a sinful*

ful man, O Lord; I dare not say as once it was said, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man*: Come Lord, for I am a sinful man. Thou couldst never come where is more need: who have need of the Physician but the sick? Come Lord; i have too often said, *Depart from me*, but if thou wil not say, *Depart*, to me, I hope I shall never again say, *Depart*, to thee: My misety faith come, my wants say come, my guilt and my sins say come, and my soul faith come; come and pardon, come and convert, come and teach, come and sanctifie, come and save me; even so come Lord Jesus.

Thus you have the sinners plea. Poor sinner, Art thou willing to return from thy sins, fear not to go to thy God: Take thee some such words as these, and go and tell the Lord, that one of his poor Ambassadors told thee from him, that he expects thee before the Throne of Grace, and is ready, if it be not thine own fault, to grant thee mercy: Go, and the Lord help thee, give thee thy hearts desire, and fulfil all thy mind, and for thy encouragement take along with thee this Scripture, Isa. 55. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

4. *Pray in faith*, James 1. 6. But let him ask in faith. You will here enquire, What faith is it that is necessary to our prevailing in prayer? I answer: Not only that faith mentioned by the Apostle, *Heb. 11.6. He that cometh to God must believe.*

believe that God is : Nor only a perswasion that he is able to perform our petitions, or that he is ready to answer those that seek him aright ; nor only a perswasion concerning prayer, that this is Gods Ordinance, appointed by him as a means whereby we may obtain mercy from him : Though all this be included in it, yet this is not all. The same faith is necessary to the acceptance of our prayers, which is required to the acceptance of our persons. That faith which gives a person interest in Christ, will alone procure the acceptance of his prayers.

Now this faith puts forth in prayer a three-fold Act.

1. It presents and offers up the prayer in the Name of Christ, *Heb. 11.4.* By *faith Abel offered his Sacrifice.* Faith carries our prayers to our Mediator, the great *Master of requests*, for his hand to be put to them, without which they will not be regarded ; yea, it puts them into his hand, it stayes unto Christ, Lord Jesus, take thou this prayer, what infirmities there are in it, do thou cover, what sins thou findest in them, do thou hide ; *Mingle thy blood with my sacrifice, let thine incense ascend with my offering,* and thus let it be carried before the Throne of Grace, where that it may speak for me, let thy blood speak for it.

2. It depends and relies upon God through Christ for acceptance and performance. It eyes and leans upon the Promise of God, which in Christ is *Yea and Amen* ; and setting to its seal, that God is true, upon this it stayes it self.

3. It

3. It works the heart to a confidence, or a confident perswasion, that God for Christs sake will hear and answer, *1 John 5. 14.* *This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us.* But here consider, that this confident perswasion, that God doth hear and accept us, how ever it argues an higher degree of Faith, and brings in much peace and comfort to the heart; and if it be well grounded, is a good Argument that the Lord intends to fulfil our desires; yet is it not so necessary to the acceptance of our prayers, but that they may be heard where this is wanting. If the former A&ts have been put forth; if there hath been a presenting them in the hands of our Mediator, joyned with some little staying of our hearts upon the Promise; though there be a great fear upon the spirit, that God doth not regard them, yet for all this they may not be rejected. I fear, saith a doubting Saint, I fear the Lord will not hear me, nor regard my prayers; there is so much sinne in them, so many weaknesses, wandrings, distrusts, distractions, that I much doubt whether the holy God will ever have respect to them; but such as they are, there I leave them, in the hands of my Advocate; I leave mine Offering on the Altar: as poor as it is, it is the best I have; and though I much question, whether it will be accepted, yet there I leave it, waiting what answer the Lord will give. I doubt not but such a prayer will be heard, and my ground is this, as it is in the justification or acceptance of our persons, so it is in the acceptance of our duties:

That

That faith which will justifie our persons, will doubtless justifie our prayers, and that weakness or wavering which will not hinder the one, will neither hinder the other. Now it is universally granted, that our persons may be justified, even when we are strongly perswaded of the contrary; and I know no reason why the like must not be granted concerning our prayers.

I note this the rather, for the support and comfort of many of the poor weakling servants of Christ, or such as are in a troubled or deserted estate; who, after they have sign'd out their broken prayers, because their own misgiving hearts return them a *negative answer*, conclude that God doth so too: *My prayers are lost, the Lord doth not regard them*: Why, how can you tell God doth not regard them? How can I tell? why, I cannot believe; the Lord will hear none but the Prayers of Faith, and I cannot believe; I cannot be perswaded that God doth hear. But by what hath been said you may perceive your mistake; you cannot be perswaded that God hears you, therefore you do not believe? Why, you may even then believe when you want this perswasion: Have you offered up your prayers in the Name of Christ? Have you committed them to his hand, to present them to his Father, and leaving them with him, and adventuring them upon his Interest, can you now but wait what answer the Lord will give? This is that Faith which will secure your prayers from being lost.

Having thus in brief shewed you what it is to pray in Faith, what remains, but that you practice accordingly, study the Attributes of God, his Power,

Power, Goodnesse, Mercy, and Truth: Study Christ, his Office, Interest, Sufficiency, and Faithfulness; study the Promises and the stability of them; let your Faith set it's seal to all this, that God is good, merciful, mighty, and true: that Christ will be faithful in his Office, that his Name is mighty with the Father, that the Promises of God are in him, yea and Amen. Strengthen your selves here, and so go before the Lord: Let God be in your heart, Christ be in your hand, the Promise in your eye, when ever there is a prayer in your mouth. Let your prayer be so presented, your dependance be so settled, and your confidence, as much as may be, be so raised, as before you have been directed; or whether you can attain to this confidence or no, yet do not fail of such dependance, and then see, what a rich return your Prayers will sooner or later bring down upon you.

But he that will pray without thus believing, let not that man think to receive any thing of the Lord; and if he doth get nothing, let him not lay the blame on Prayer, as if this were an empty useless thing, but on his unbelief. The answer which God gives to prayer, is always this, *Be it unto thee according to thy Faith*; And in this is included, *Be it unto thee according to thy unbelief*.

This is the first means or help to a godly life, Prayer.

THe second special duty I shall direct you in, is holy Meditation. And touching this, my purpose is not to insist upon the general nature of it,

it, but only to give you some directions for your putting it in practice.

The directions which I shall give, shall be such as concern,

1. The Matter of it.

2. The Method.

Concerning the former, I shall reduce the chief matters to be ordinarily meditated on to seven Heads; which, as I shall afterwards advise, may serve an Head for a day, and so in every week you may go over the whole.

I. Head concerning God.

BEGIN with him, who is the *beginning of all things*, in whom we have our being; in whose nature, as well as his will, is the very foundation of all Religion. In the spiritual nature of God, is the reason of our spiritual worship, his wisdome is the reason of our submission to him, his power of our dependance on him, his holiness of our conformity to him, his justice of our fear, his goodnesse of our love, his truth of our trust, his grace of our prayers, his glory of our praises.

Now there are two things especially (that I may contract all into as narrow a room as possible) which you may pitch your thoughts, and exercise your meditations upon concerning God: Namely his

Dreadfulness.

Goodness.

Direc^t.

Direc^t. 1. In order to the bringing you to a due apprehension, and sense of the dreadfulness of God; set before your eyes, what the Scriptures speak of the Majesty, Glory, Omnipotence, Om-niscience, Holiness, Severity, and Righteousness of God. The Scriptures speak of the Name of God, as a fearful Name, Deut. 28. 58. *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, [the Lord thy God.]* And this dreadfulnesse of God, is set forth,

1. By the greatnessse of his power, *Jer. 5. 22.* *Fear ye not me; saith the Lord: Will ye not tremble at my presence, Luke 12. 5.*
2. By the Immensity of his Nature, *Psal. 139. 7.* *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence?*
3. By the Glory of his Holiness, *Exod. 15. 11.* *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, who art glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders.*
4. By his Justice and Severity, *Heb. 10. 31.* *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebr. 12. 29. For our God is a consuming fire.*

Direc^t. 2. That you may understand, and be duly affected with the goodnessse of God; consider what the Scriptures speaks concerning his All-sufficiency, loving Kindness, Mercy, Faithfulness, Patience, &c. *Gen. 15. 1.* *Fear not Abraham, I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward. Psal. 36. 7, 8, 9.* *Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds. How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, therefore the children of men put their trust in thee. They shall be abundantly satisfied*

with thy fatnesse, for with thee is the Fountain of life, in thy light, we shall see light. Psalm 50. 5. For his anger endureth but a moment ; in his favour is life. Psalm 73. 26. My flesh and my heart fail-eth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Psalm 91. 4. He shall cover thee with his feathers ; and under his wings shalt thou trust ; his truth shall be thy Shield and Buckler. Psalm 84. 11. The Lord God is a Sun and a Shield. These Scriptures set forth the Lord, as a sufficient portion, wherein his people may be happy, and a sure refuge, wherein they may be safe. He is a Fountain of Light, Life, Joy, Rest, Peace, ever-lasting blessedness, and everlasting safety. He is the Inheritance of the Saints, wherein they shall be satisfied ; and their defence, wherein they shall be safe for ever.

Direct. 3. Ask thy heart these Questions :

Quest. 1. Is not this God worthy to be feared, loved, believed in, and chosen for my portion and trust ?

Some chuses Riches for their portion, some pleasures, some put their trust in worldly friends ; but will it not be well with me, if I can bring my heart to chuse, and can obtain the Lord to be my friend, my refuge, and my portion ?

Qn. 2. Is it not good for me to draw nigh to God ?

To get acquaintance and intimacy with God, to dwell in his presence, and to live in the light, of his Countenance ; is there any life so full of true pleasure, and satisfying delight, as to enjoy and behold the face of God in Righteousness ?

Quest. 3. Is the Lord mine ?

Is he reconciled to me, is his love and mercy made sure to me? Some are confident the Lord is theirs, but they are mistaken; am not I mistaken? is the Lord mine indeed? my God and my Portion, and my Friend indeed? if he be not, Then,

Quest. 4. *How may I obtain the Lord to be mine?*
What pains should I refuse? what course should I count too hard? what price too great, to lay out for such an Inheritance? Oh, how happily were I provided for, what a sufficiency had I laid up for me, for my body, for my soul, for this life, for everlasting; were the Lord once sure to me? what shall I do to obtain him? If he be mine, then,

Quest. 5. *What shall I render to the Lord?*

Oh the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the Love and Goodness of God to my Soul, that he should bestow himself on such a worm. 'Tis much that he should give me a being in his sight; that he should give me bread, or cloaths; that he should feed me with the crumbs that fall from his Table. 'Tis a wonder he should not feed me with Ashes, with Gall and Wormwood, with fire and brimstone, that he hath not cloathed me with flames, with fury and vengeance; 'tis a wonder he should give any of his good creatures to comfort me, his Earth to be mine Inheritance, and my portion; but that he should give himself to me, that ever a poor creature should be so provided for, as to feed upon his God, to live upon his God, to possess his God for a portion; Oh! come unto me all ye that fear the Lord, come

unto me, and I will tell you what he hath done for my Soul, *He that is mighty hath done for me great things, and holy is his Name.* Oh, that I could love thee more! Oh, that I could please thee, and praise thee, and honour thee, and rejoice, and triumph, and make my boast of my God, and speak good of thy Name, while I have any being, *The Lord is my portion, the lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, and I have a goodly heritage.*

II. Head concerning Sin.

Direct. 1. Exercise your thoughts on the evil Nature of sin, and consider what the Scriptures speak, concerning,

1. *The malignity that is in Sin.*

2. *The guilt of Sin.*

1. *Concerning the malignity which is in Sin;* calling it by the name of *plague, leprosie, gangrene, poysion, death, hell, enmity, treachery, rebellion, filthiness, rottennesse, vooit, &c.* All which are Scripture expressions, which also tell us, that it hath made us in God's account, *fools, beasts, dogs, swine, serpents, vipers, devils, &c.* What a Monster is Sin, that must have so many, and such names, to expresse the malignity that is in it?

2. *Concerning the guilt of Sin,* Rom. 3. 19. *All the world is become guilty before God,* Mat. 5. 22. *Guilt hath two things in it :*

First, A merit of everlasting wrath. Every sinner

sinner is worthy to die, worthy to be damned.

Secondly, An obligation, or binding over to wrath, Acts 8. 23. *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity.* Sinners are bound under a curse, bound over to eternal vengeance.

Direct. 2. Consider your own particular sinnes, both the special prevailing sinnes of your *Hearts*; as ignorance, unbelief, stubbornesse, obstinacy, pride, passion, covetousnesse, malice, &c. And the evils of your practise, lying, swearing, drunkenesse, oppression; Reckon up as near as you can, and write down in a Roll or Catalogue, all the several wickednesse you have been guilty of, and can remember, together with your sins of Omission, neglects of Prayer, Hearing, &c. your neglect of Christ, and the Gospel, &c.

Direct. 3. Ask thy heart these *Questions*:

Quest. 1. *Am I not a sinner?*

Quest. 2. *Is all this which the Scriptures speak of, sin, and sinners in general, true of me?*

Am I by my very nature, such a serpent, such a viper such a dog, such a beast in the sight of God? Is there all this enmity, and treachery, and rebellion rooted in my nature? Am I this guilty creature worthy to die? Am I in this gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity? If this be my case, Oh, how can I lift up my face in the presence of God, without shame, and blushing, and self-loathing, and self-abhorrence?

Quest. *Is my filth and guilt done away?*

This was once my condition, is it not still? Is the Enmity slain, is my corruption subdued?

is my conscience purged, my soul washed, are my sins pardoned, is my guilt removed? If not, then,

Quest. 4. What if this corruption should never be purged, this guilt never be removed?

What if I should die in this case? If all this finne, and this guilt, should stand and stare me in the face, when I come to look Death in the face? What if I should appear in this woful plight before the Judgement Seat? May I not fear it may be so? My finne hath been so long growing, and rooting in my heart, I have stood it out so long against the Gospel, I have had so many warnings, so many Convictions, and yet mine iniquity remains unpurged, that I have reason to fear that it may never be purged. And, Oh, what if it should not?

Quest. 5. What must I do to be saved from my sins?

I see I am in an evil and a woful case, *but is there no balm in Gilead, is there no Physician there,* that can heal such a desperate disease? Is there no ransom to be found, that may redeem such a captive? Is there no blood shed, that may cleanse me, even me from all my unrighteousnesse? Is not Christ exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to this very purpose, that he might give Repentance and Forgiveness of sinnes? Wherefore is the Gospel Preached to me? Doth not Christ therein call to me, and bid me come to him and be saved? Is such an opportunity to be slighted? Is Redemption from such a state, worth the making after? May I obtain Redemption by Christ whether I seek it or not, whether

whether I repent or not? Must I not believe or be damned, repent or perish? Is it a time for me to delay, or linger in a matter of such importance? Awaken, O my Soul, put away thy sloath, lay aside thy excuses, and bethink thy self what thou wilt do. The Lord calls thee this day, calls thee to return and repent, that thine iniquities may be blotted out; bethink thy self what Answer thou wilt return. Wilt thou hearken or not?

III. Head concerning Christ.

Direct. 1. First, consider what the Scriptures speak;

1. Concerning the Excellency of his person, Joh. 1. 14. *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth:* Heb. 1. 3. *Who being the brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person.*

2. Concerning the Glory of the Mystery of Christ Crucified, Isa. 53 throughout; *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not; Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God. But he was Wounded for our Transgressions, he was Bruised for our Iniquities, the chastisements of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like Sheep, have gone astray,*

and have turned every one to his way, and God hath laid on him the iniquities of all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, Col. 1. 27. To whom God will make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory. Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. Who being in the form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

The Gospel is a Mystery full of Wonders.

1. There is a wonder of Righteousness and Severity: That God should not spare, but punish Sin, though upon his own Son.

2. A Wonder of Wisdome: That God should bring Light out of Darknesse, Life out of Death, that God should bring about the Rising of the World by the Fall of the Lord; the Riches of the World by the Poverty of their Lord; the fulness of the Saints, by the emptiness of the King of Saints.

3. A Wonder of Mercy: That GOD should hearden his heart against the Cry of his Son, and open his Bowels to the cry of Sinners.

4. A Wonder of Love: Love in the Father, in giving his Son; Love in the Son, in giving himself, his blood, his life, his soul a ransom for sinne; and all this for worms, traytors, enemies.

Dire*ct*.

Direct. 2. Ask thy heart these Questions :

Quest. 1. Oh, what a Monster is sin !

What an Hell, what a bottomlesse Pit is it, of malignity, and wickednesse, that none but God can expiate or purge it away ; that God cannot do it, but by taking flesh ; that God manifested in the flesh, could not purge away sin but by suffering ; that no suffering would serve but death ; that no death could serve but such a ciuel and cursed death ? Oh, what a Monster is Sin, that must have such blood, the blood of God to take it away !

Quest. 2. What strange Love is the Love of Christ ?

1. Strange in regard of the fruit and benefit of it : All that holines and beauty that my spirit is cloathed with, all that peace and joy that possesies my heart, all my glorious hopes and expectations for heresfter, all that difference that is betwixt my state and the state of *Cain, Judas*, and the whole Reprobate World ; this is the Love of Christ. Where had I now been had it not been for the Love of Christ ?

2. Strange Love in regard of the fervency and ardency of it ; and that not only to the whole generation of the Elect, but to my soul in particular. To expresse this, ask this one question farther, What if Christ had done and suffered all this for me alone ? What if there had been but one sinner in the world, and I had been that sinner, and Christ should have come down from Heaven, cloathed himself with flesh, given himself to death, given such a glorious Gospel, sent forth such a multitnde of Ambassadours to Preach to, to convert and save

save this one Soul, this my Soul, this had been strange Love. Such is the Love of Christ to every Elect person, that if there had been but one Sinner, Christ would have done and suffered all this for one Sinner, rather then he should have perished.

Quest. 3. *Is Christ mine?*

Have I a share in the Gospel? Is my Name written in the Lambs Book? *All are not Israel:* though Christ died for all, yet all are not made alive by him. There are many from whom the Gospel is hid; there are many that have rejected the Gospel, that have put from them the Word of Life. Whilst there are such multitudes that are lost and perish for ever, is my soul found, found in Christ? Hath he that hath died for me drawn me to himself? Hath he that hath given me a liberty to lay hold on him, given me a heart to lay hold on him? Hath he given me his Spirit in my heart, to sanctify and cleanse me from my sins? If I have not the Spirit of Christ in me, I am none of his. Unless I wash thee thou hast no part with me. If he be not mine, then,

Quest. 4. *What may I do to get Christ to be mine?*

May I have him without seeking him? Can I live by Christ without coming to Christ, believing, repenting, and following of Christ? Is this ignorance, this idleness, is this earthly, this carnal course I take, is this loose and vain life I live, is this the way to get an interest in Christ? If Christ be mine, then,

Quest. 5. *How may I walk worthy of Christ?*

Is it not by being made conformable to him?

Con-

Conformed to his Image, by being holy, humble and meek : Conformed to him in his obedience, cheerfully and readily doing the Will of God : Conformed to him in his Sufferings, by being content to be brought down, and laid low, and made vile for his Name : Conformed to his Resurrection and Ascension, that this poor soul, which hath descended with Christ, may also ascend with him : Ascend in holy desires and affections, ascend in holy praises and acknowledgments, confessing to him, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, for thou hast redeemed my life from death, and crowned me with loving kindness and tender mercies.*

IV. Head concerning the vanity and misery of a worldly life.

BY a worldly life understand any course or way of life, which is short of a godly life. That which the Apostle calls, *Ephesians 2. 2. The course of this world;* such a life, the main businesse, care, and delight, whereof lies in the managing our worldly affairs and interells ; in buying, selling, working, trading to get together this worlds goods. The main comfort whereof stands in the enjoying these earthly things ; when as for souls, and the things of another world, little or no care is taken about them, and as little pleasure taken in them.

Dire^{ct}.

Direct. 1. Consider what the Scriptures speak concerning the Vanitie and Miserie of such a life, Psal. 30. 6. *Surely man walketh in a vain shew, he is disquieted in vain; he heapeþ up Riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.* Matth. 16. 26. *For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Jam. 5. 1, 2, 3. *Go to now ye rich men, weep & howl for your miseries that shall come upon you: Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat you as it were fire, ye have heaped up treasures together for the last dayes.* Luke 12. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. *And he spake a parable unto them concerning a certain Rich man, whose ground brought forth very plenteously, and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, this I will do, I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits: and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods, laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.* But God said to him, *Thou fool, this night shall thy Soul be required of thee, then whose shall those things be that thou hast provided?* So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

Direct. 2. Ask thy heart,

Quest. 1. *Is not my life a worldly life?*

What have I done for hereafter? What have I laid up for the world to come? Have I been trading for Heaven, have I been trading in faith, repentance, prayer, have I been sowing in righteousness

reousnesse and mercy, following of holinesse and purity? What labour and pains have I taken in seeking knowledge, grace, an interest in Christ, reconciliation with God, &c. that it might be well with my soul hereafter? my body is cared for, I have enough laid up for that, my wife and children are all cared for, I have made sufficient provision for them, but is not my poor soul uncared for?

Quest. 2. *How long will this life and the comforts of it last?*

My soul is immortal, and must never die. I must have a being some where or other to all Eternity. Is the happiness which I have chosen and pursued an everlasting happiness? Are my Money, and my Corn, and my Land, everlasting.

Quest. 3. *What shall become of me when this life and the comforts of it fail?*

Will this golden or silver key open the gate of Heaven to me? Will my money buy me an inheritance in the Land of Promise? Will my christiness and good husbandry for this world plead for me before my Judge, or excuse my neglect of my soul? will the memory of my plenty, or my pleasure, or my ease, in which I have lived here, be a comfort & refreshing to my soul hereafter? Can all my carnal friends and companions, with whom I have lived so merrily, and spent so many a jolly hour, can their good word stand me in stead then? will God own me, or Christ plead for me then? Is not this he whom I have despised, and refused to hearken to, and will he not then say to me, *Go to the gods whom thou hast chosen, go to thy money,*
and

and thy pleasures, and thy companions, let these save thee if they can. 'Oh what shall I do, and where shall I dwell for ever if I continue in this vain course ?

Ques. 4. *Shall I now set upon a better course ?*

Shall I in earnest ? Wilt thou, oh my Soul, wilt thou now in earnest become an adventurer for another world ? A Trayeller to the holy City, which is above ? Wilt thou cast in thy lot with Christ and the everlasting Gospel, wilt thou at last fall to labour for the true riches, and enduring substance ; Wilt thou provide thee bags that wax not old, a treasure in Heaven that faileth not ? Shall I take this course, or shall I continue as I am ?

V. Head concerning the excellency, blessedness, and necessity of a Godly Life.

Direct. I. Consider what the Scriptures speak concerning,

The Entrance
Nature
Blessedness
Necessity of a godly Life.

1. Concerning the Entrance of a godly Life, or the way by which we come to be godly ; that is express, by being born of God, John 3. by being converted to God, Acts 3. 19. Repent therefore and be converted ; by having Christ formed upon our hearts, Gal. 4. 19. *My little children, of whom I travel*

travel in birth again, until Christ be formed in you. A new birth must go before a new life, conversion before an holy conversation.

2. Concerning the *Nature of a godly Life*; which the Scripture sets forth in these and such like expressions: *Walking with God, walking in the fear of God, and the comforts of the holy Ghost, living by faith, having our conversation in Heaven, and as it becometh the Gospel, being holy, harmless; the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked generation, shining forth as lights in the world, denying all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, living righteously, soberly, and godly; keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, walking circumspectly, keeping a good conscience, &c.* By all which expressions, and many such like, it appears, that there is more required to a true godly life then is ordinarily imagined.

3. Of the *Blessedness of a godly Life*, Psal. 1.1, 2. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the way of sinners, but his delight is in the Law of the Lord. Psal. 4.4. The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself, hath taken him out from the rest of the world, to be his own peculiar possession, his Favourite, his Servant, his Child, on whom he intends to bestow himself for an Inheritance.

Direct. 2. Ask thy heart,

Quest. 1. Am I converted to God?

Is there any supernatural change wrought upon me? Is this change a thorough change? Conversion is not a slight, but a great and marvellous change. Am I become a new creature? Is there a new light set up in me, a new life begotten in my heart?

Am-

Am I become a man of quite another constitution, temper, disposition, then formerly I was? Am I born from above, and is my heart now set upon things above?

Quest. 2. *Is my life a godly life?*

Do I think in my conscience, that the course of life which I live, is that which the Scriptures mean, by *walking with God, living by Faith; having the conversation in heaven, keeping a good conscience, walking circumspectly, &c.* Can this fleshly idle, easie, trifling life which I live, be possibly accounted a truly godly life?

Quest. 3. *Is a godly life necessary?*

Can I be saved without it? Do not the Scriptures entail everlasting blessedness in the life to come, on godliness of life here?

Quest. 4. *Can I be too godly?*

Can I have too much likenesse to God? too much care of my wayes? too much fear of sin? Can I be too sure that God is mine? Can I have too much peace, too much joy, and inward comfort? I may be too rich to be happy, too great to be good, too merry to be wise, but I cannot be too gracious, too humble, too watchful, too circumspect! Let me ask of dying persons, whether they have taken more care then needs? whether they have more grace then needs? Let me ask of those, who when they come at last to be weighed in the ballance, are found wanting, whether there were any fear of making too sure, or being too busie, and diligent, and painful about the work of their Souls?

Quest. 5. *Shall I now, without any longer delay, set upon a godly life?*

If

If it be necessary to take up this holy course, when shall I begin? Shall I this day resolve upon it? Can I begin too soon? Can I look after God too soon? I may defer too long till it be too late, and what if I should? What if I should stay so long in Sodom, till it be too late to escape to Zoar. What if I should dwell in the tabernacles of Wickednesse, till it be too late to return into the way of Righteousnesse? Awake, Oh my Soul, awake from thy worldliness, and sensuality, away from thy carelessness; To day, to day, if thou wilt hear his Voice, give thy self to God, give thy self up to the power of his Spirit, and government of his Word. Hitherto I have been a fool, hitherto I have been a servant of sin and the world; Oh that from henceforth I might yield my self to God, as one made alive from the dead.

VI. Head concerning Death and Judgment.

Direct. 1. Think on what the Scriptures speak concerning,
The } Dread } of Death.
Death }

i. Concerning the Dread of Death, Rev. 6. 8. Its set forth by a pale horse, an horse for strength there's no resistance of it: an horse for its swiftness, an horse for its office, and use, to carry away; a pale horse for its gaffliness: Death

A man with arid withly countenance, that strikes terror into all hearts, and paleness into all faces; Job 18, 14. He called the King of Terrors; the black Prince, the Prince of Clouds and Darknesse; as some render it: Darknesse itself is terrible in it, and the King of Terrors, that rules, the highest and most terrible of Tyrants; and of all of them, of all the devils, he is the greatest. The terror of Death arises from his Office or Errand, upon which it comes, which is to accuse the guilty sinners, and commit them to custody, to be reserved to Judgement. To revenge the quarrel of an angry God. By sin death entered, Death came into the world, first only as the *Pestis aqua Peccati*, one of its Relations or Attendants, but as the *vindex Peccati*. By sin, man provoked God, by Death, God takes vengeance on man.

3. To cut off, and carry us away to our place. Death is the door betwixt the two worlds; the parting point, where sinners take their leave for ever, of their pomps, and their pleasures of their Houses and Lands, and their Friends, so as never to return to them again.

Its dreadful to be carried away from our habitations and acquaintance, we know not whither; sad was the death of him, who dying said, *Anguis vixi, dubius morior, & nunc quo vado nescio*. I have lived in care, I die in doubt, but whether I am going, I cannot tell; But to them that understand whether death is carrying them, (as 'tis the case of self-condemned sinners) into the place of darknesse and eternal misery: This is

is it that makes Death indeed the King of Terrors.

2. From its Armour Death is furnished;

1. With a Dart; this notes the stroke of Death, whereby it dissolves this Tabernacle, divides betwixt soul and body: This Dart of Death is such, against which there is no Armour of Proofe can secure us, from which no quality or condition can exempt us; neither King, nor Captive; neither Rich, nor Poor; neither evil Men, nor good Men, can escape this Dart. Whomsoever Death strikes it strikes sure, and strikes home, and never fails of doing Execution.

2. With a sting, 1 Cor. 15. 56. *The sting of death is sin.* A sting doth two things, 1. It Pierces: 2. It Poisons. Hence follow those tumours and inflammations, and that anguish that a sting puts men to.

But what is the sting of Death? 'Tis sin; this is the Poyson upon the Dart of Death, that makes it so full of torment; an evil heart, an evil conscience, an evil life, this is it that makes Death so terrible. A guilty Conscience often stings a sinner in his life, in his health, in the midst of all prosperity; but when death and a guilty conscience strike in together, then it stings with a witnessse.

2. Concerning the *Death of Death*, or its destruction. This Enemy is to be destroyed, Hos. 13. 14. Yes, it is in part destroyed already, 2 Tim. 1. 10. Christ, by dying and rising again, hath overcome Death; and this not for himself, but for his members, on whose behalf

he hath disarmed Death, and taken away its sting ; so that though it strike them, yet it cannot sting them : Death, as an Hornet, hath stung our Lord, and in him hath lost its sting : Hereupon the Apostle, in the persons of all believers, triumphs over Death, 1 Cor. 15.55,57. *Ob death, where is thy sting ? Thanks be to God, who hath given us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Christians, that through Christ have conquered sin, by the same Jesus have conquered Death ; so that now its possible for thee to live above the fear of Death ; some natural fears there may be, some shrinkings back of the flesh, but the great fear is over, the bitterness of death is past.

2. Consider what the Scripture speaks concerning Judgment : consider these two Scriptures, 2 Cor. 5.10. *For we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ.* Matth. 25. 34. to the end, *Then shall the King say to them on the right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdoms prepared for you, before the foundations of the world, &c.*

Direct. 2. Ask thy heart these Questions :

Quest. 1. *Must I not die ?*

Quest. 2. *Whether will my death carry me ?*

In which of the two Regions of the other world is my death like to land me ? Either in the Region of everlasting Light, or in the Region of everlasting Darknesse ? To which of those two Regions am I now travelling ? By this I may guesse whither my death will transport me.

Quest. *What a strange change will Death make upon me ?*

What

What a change of my Judgment and Opinion? With what a different eye shall I look on all things then, from what I do now? Shall I look on God, on Christ, on Holiness, on peace of Conscience with such a slighting and undervaluing eye; or on the glory and pleasures, and lusts of the world with such an admiring and doting eye, when Death comes, as now I do? A Godly Life, a good Conscience, the promises, and priviledges, and hopes of the Gospel, I can now look on as follies, and fancies, and trifles, shall I count them so then? Sin, and guilt, I make a matter of nothing now; shall I have the same thoughts at death? If I could speak with any soul that's gotten one step beyond the grave, and should ask him, What do you think of sin, and the pleasures of sin now? What an answer might I then expect?

What a strange change will Death make upon my person? When, it I be a Saint, this poor soul that hath had its habitation in *Meshech*, hath been imprisoned in a sinful body, mourning, and sighing, and labouring under the burthen of sins, and lusts, and temptations, and doubts, and fears, and scoffs, and scorns, shall in an instant be set at liberty from all this, and be lodged in the arms and bosome of the Lord of Glory. Or, if I be a sinner, when I shall be taken from all my glory and greatness, from all my delights and dalliances, from all my hopes and confidence, and be thrown down like *Lucifer* Son of the morning, from all my brightness, into the blacknesse of darknesse for ever. When though I lye down in hopes and confi-

dence, that I shall have rest, yet within a minute after Death hath closed mine eyes, I shall awaken in everlasting flames. How will my undone soul then cry out, Oh, where am I? Is this my place? Must this be my dwelling for ever? Are all my hopes and confidences come to this? Is all my mirth and my pleasures come to this? Wo, wo, wo to me miserable wretch, how am I deceived, whither am I fallen?

Quest. 4. *How dreadful will this day of Death be to sinners when it is come?*

Whilst it's only Preached, or thought of at a distance, it affects but little, but when that day of darknesse is come, and they shall feel their house of clay falling; when their last sand is running, their last breath drawing, their miserable souls launching forth into the depth of Eternity; when a few minutes will lodge them in the place of darknesse and everlasting torments: What a black day will it appear then?

Quest. 5. *On which hand am I like to stand in the Judgment?*

Am I like to stand on the Right hand, or on the Left? among the Sheep, or among the Goats? On which hand do I stand now? Have I my conversation among the Goats, my fellowship with the Goats here, and can I expect to have my sentence with the Sheep?

Quest. 6. *What may I do to get above the fear of Death and Judgment?*

How blessed is the state of those Christians that are gotten beyond this fear? They may well be content to bear the Cross; they may well be patient in tribulation, they need fear none of

of those things they shall suffer here, their great
fear is over, death is swallowed up in victory.
But how may I, upon good grounde, be out of
this fear? How may I be fit to die, and to stand
in the Judgement, and thence not be afraid?
Only if I could get the sting of death out, this
sin crucified, this guilty removed. Oh, If I could
get such a life over which death can have no
power; if I could get Christ to be my Life, my
Judge, to be my Friend, then welcome Death,
and the Grave, I welcome the Great Day, then
that black hour will become the blessed hours,
then that dark and gloomy day, at the approach
whereof, this sinfull world will cast to the Moun-
tains to cover them, and the Rocks to fall on
them, would be to me a glorious day; wherein
I should lift up my head with joy, because my
Redemption is so nigh. So let me live that I may
be fit to die, and then let my Lord come when e-
ver he pleases; Yea, then I may say, *Why are the*
wheels of his Chariots so long a coming? Make haste,
*my beloved, and be thou like to a Rose on the Moun-*tains of Spices.**

VII. Head concerning Eterniij, Or the World to come.

THERE is a Two-fold *Eternity*; Of *Blessedness*,
and of *Misery*: The *one*, the portion of the
Saints; the *other*, the reward of all the ungodly
of the Earth.

Direct. 1. Consider what the Scripture speaks of.

1. Concerning the Eternity of Blessedness;

Heb. 4:9. There remaineth therefore a Rest to the People of God. Psalm 16: ult. As thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore, 2 Cor. 3:17. From our right affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Whence note, that the state of the godly in another world, is, 1. A state of Rest; 2. A state of Joy; 3. A state of Glory; 4. That the Joy of this Rest is unspeakable and unconceivable; therefore called the Rest of God, the Joy of the Lord: When a King makes a Feast, he makes a Royal Feast; When a King gives gifts and favors, he gives like a King. God will save like a God, reward like a God; such shall be the reward of the Righteous, that men shall say, Verily he is a God that judgeth, Psalm 58:11, 15. that this Joy is Eternal, 2 Cor. 4: 18. The things which are not seen, are Eternal.

2. Concerning the Eternity of Misery; Isa. 30.

33. For Tophet is ordained of old. Tophet is a place lying in the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, where the Idolatrous Jews burnt their Children in Sacrifice to Moloch. And it is used as a Type to signify Hell, or the place and punishment of the Damned hereafter: Whereof this is the description; He hath made it deep and large, the Pile whereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it, Match. 8: 12. But the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Mark 9: 44. Where

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,

Whence note, That the Torments of the Ungodly in another World shall be,

1. *Intollerable*. It is the Wrath of the Lord that will lie upon them; *the breath of the Lord* shall kindle and feed their flames. As the Lord will *smit like a God*, so he will *punish like a God*: The Wisdom, Power, Severity, and Justice of God shall be exercised in compounding such a deadly Draught, such exquisite Torments, that the ungodly World shall feel, that he is a God with whom they have to do.

2. *Eternal*, that shall never have an end. This makes Hell to be Hell indeed, a Pit without bottom, a night that hath no day following it, a Grave from which there is no Resurrection. Oh the heighth, and depth, and length, and breadth of this one word *Eternity*.

Direct. 2. Ask thy Heart.

Quest. 1. *Who shall ascend into the holy Hill?*
Shall the Unclean enter in thither? Or the Ignorant, or Unbelievers, or Adulterers, or Drunkards? Dost not the Scriptures tell me who they are? *Psal: 15.* throughout, *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart; he that backbites not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbor, in whose eyes a vile person is contemned, &c.* *Mattb. 5. 3. to the 12.* *The poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the poor in heart, the peacemakers:* These are they that shall ascend into the holy Hill.

Quest,

Quell. 2. Who shall descend into the Deep?

Rev. 20. 15. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the lake of fire. Chap. 22. 15. For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Adulterers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. 2 Thes. 1, 8, 9. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power.

Quell. 3. Am I in the way to this Rest of God?

Quell. 4. Is my Title to this Rest sure?

Is my name written in the Book of Life? Am I sealed with that Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of my inheritance? Have I gotten an assurance that Christ is mine, and Heaven is mine? Is not this assurance to be had? Is there not a Promise left unto me of entering into this Rest? May not this Promise, by my believing, and accepting, and adventuring upon it, be made sure to me? What mean I to sit down so quietly, short of this assurance? Am I content to leave my earthly inheritance under such uncertainties, that I cannot tell what to call my own, I cannot tell whether I have any thing or nothing? Do I refuse and labor, cost, counsel, that may secure my worldly interest? And what, is it only Heaven and everlasting Glory, this is not worth the securing?

Quell. 5. What if I should fall short of this Rest?

If at last I should see Abrahams, Isaacs, and Jacobs, and all the Prophets, sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, and my self be thrust out? I have made

made profession of Religion; I have had some good will to the wayes of God, born some affection to the people of God, had some communion and fellowship with them, had a name and good opinion amongst them; I have gone to the House of God with them, joyned in Prayers, Fastings, Sacraments with them; I have attained to some probable evidences of Grace. But what if notwithstanding all this I should be found at last to be short of Sincerity and of true saving Grace? I have complained often of an earthly heart, of a slothful heart, of a careless heart, of a lingring delaying heart; I have had some motions and stirrings in me, to shake my self out of this sloth, to awake and rouze my self up out of these delayings and triflings; I have been thinking often of taking more care and pains; I have been wishing often for a diligent heart; I have been hoping that it will not be thus alwayes with me, but that one time or other I shall attain to more life and seriousnesse: But what if after all this complaining, and thinking, and wishing, and hoping it will be better, I should still run on thus from one day to another, from one year to another, till I be surprized, and should be taken away before I have gotten my heart to a thorow closing with God in Christ?

Quest. 6. *How joyful will my state be when that day comes, if I may then be counted worthy to enter into this Rest?*

When the voice shall sound in mine ears, *Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* When all these filthy garments and rags of the flesh shall be put off, when all these

these bitter tears shall be wiped away, when all the clouds of darknesse, doubts, fears, sorrows, afflictions shall be blowne over ; when I shall be brought into the presence of the King of Saints, and see all those glorious things that have been spoken of the City of God : when mine head shall wear that immortal crown, and my heart shall taste and drink of those everlasting pleasures at Gods right hand : When I shall be brought into the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, to an innumerable company of Angels, to God the Judge of all men, to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, to the spirits of Just men made perfect ; when my heart shall acknowledg, Now I know indeed whom I have believed, and see for what I have laboured : when this poor soul, that in its travel towards Sion hath passed through a wilderness, lyen among the pots, been fed with tears, cloathed with reproaches, clog'd with infirmities, discouraged with fears and dismayings, shall after all this be set down in the Kingdom of God, and be lodged in the arms and bosome of the Lord of Glory, and bear a part in those everlasting praises and *Hallelujahs* before the Throne of God for ever ; when mine eyes shall come to see all this, and my heart to possesse it, will it not be a joyful day ?

Quest. 7. *Can mine heart endure to think of being flur'd out from this blessednesse for ever ?*

Can I burn ? can I endure the vengeance of eternal fire ? Will boyling oyl, burning brimstone, scalding lead, a glowing oven, a scorching furnace, be an easie lodging for me ? Thou wilt

not

not (oh my soul) be perwaded to repent, there is too much pain in that : Thou canst not bear a crosse, or an affliction, a scoff, or a reproach, talk to thee of crucifying thy flesh, of denying thy self, of parting with thy fleshly lusts, thy worldly companions, of entring in at the strait gate, of walking strictly and precisely according to the Gospel, thou cryest out, Oh these are hard sayings, who can bear them ? But how wilt thou do to dwell with the devouring fire ? how wilt thou dwell with everlasting burnings ? Whatsoever it seems to thee now, think what Hell will be to thee when the day comes that thou must descend into it : No w thou lookeſt at it as a scare-crow, or a bug-bear ; thou canſt drink away, or laugh away the fear of it ; but what will it be to thee, when thou feeleſt thy ſelf wrapt up in the flames of it, and not a drop of water left to cool thy tongue ? Think on Hell, oh my ſoul, and then think on Christ, and conſider, if a Redemeſer from ſuch a misery be not worth the accepting ; think on Hell, and then think on ſin, then think on thy carnal pleaſures and delights, and conſider how they will reliſh with thee, when thus ſalted with everlasting fire. Are these the things for which I die ? Are these the price for which I ſell my ſoul to Hell ? Away, away from me all my lusts and pleaſures, away from me my companions in ſin, I confeſſe I love you too well, but I muſt not burn for you, I muſt not damn my ſoul to please my flesh.

Touching the practice of this duty, take these two further Directions.

1. Every day, morning and evening, ſet apart ſome time for ſecret prayer ; and when you go to pray,

pray, do not rush inconsiderately upon it, but first sit down, and take one of these Heads, meditate on what the Scriptures speak upon them, and then propose the several questions to your hearts, and when you find your hearts affected and warmed by these meditations, then fall to prayer.

2. Let each mornings Meditation be ordinarily matter for your thoughts to work on, and for discourse that day, unlesse providence cast in, and calls you to some other profitable subjects.

The matter of Meditation is purposely divided into seven Heads, to the end you may take one of the Heads for each dayes Meditation, and so in every week you may go over the whole, being the chief things of Religion. And thus continuing from day to day, from week to week, you will be both more thoroughly acquainted, and more deeply affected wих the things of God, and will find, through his blessing, more liveliness and enlargement in Prayer, and more comfortable success.

Only take heed of Formality, of resting in the work done, of going on in a round of duty, without a due regard to the end of Duty. Let this be your aim in all, to get your hearts more fixed upon, and affected with the things of the world to come, more enlarged and quickened, and more effectually carried on in that course of holy and heavenly walking, the end whereof is everlasting life.

But now, least any should complain that this course is too tedious, and that which they cannot have time daily for, or that by reason of ignorance, or want of helps they cannot perform it;

I shall add this, That such persons who are weaker in their understandings, and thence unable to go through with this course, and all others at such seasons as they are unavoidably straitned for time, may, instead of the larger, take this shorter course.

When ever thou serest upon the Duty of prayer, sit down, and ask thy heart these Questions.

Quest. 1. *What am I? am I a believer or an unbeliever, converted or unconverted? do I think in my conscience I belong to God, or do I not fear I am yet the child of the Devil?*

Quest. 2. *What do I? what are my ways, are they such as please the Lord, and tend to the salvation of my soul, or are they the ways of death and damnation?*

Quest. 3. *Before whose presence do I now stand? Is it not before the Lord, the Almighty God, who is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and the avenger of those that slight or rebel against him?*

Quest. 4. *What am I come before the Lord about? Is it not to plead with him for my soul, to beg my life at his hand, to beg my pardon, and redemption from everlasting death, and to obtain grace for the salvation of my soul?*

This short and easie course would be some advantage, though to those that are able, and can redeem so much time, I would commend the constant use of the larger Directions.

THE third special Duty I shall direct you in is,
Self-examination.

It is of great use to the carrying us on in an holy course, to know our state. For,

1. By the knowledge of our state, we shall the better know our work; when we know what we are, we shall the better know what we have to do. If the question be, *What must I do to be saved?* The answer of that will depend upon another question, *How far forth am I come already?* Am I converted or unconverted, in a state of sin, or in a state of grace? Let that question be first answered, and the answer of the other will be easie.

2. By the knowledge of this, that we are in a good estate, we shall have much encouragement to hasten on. Assurance will quicken and encourage us on in the way of holiness. Those that affirm, that the *Doctrine of assurance* is a licentious Doctrine, and serves for nothing but to maintain men in a loose, lazy, and idle life, understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 'Tis all one as if they affirmed, That the more assurance any person hath of the love of God, the less he will love God, or that the more he loves God, the less care he will take to serve or please him. Those that know no other motive to duty, but fear, may preach such Doctrine; but those that have found the quickning and constraining power of love, must lay down both their reason and sence too, before they can believe it.

The

The way to know our selves is to search and examine our selves, 1 Cor. 13, 4. Examine your selves, prove your selves, know ye not your own selves?

Now to help you in this duty of Self-examination, I shall give you these two Directions.

1. When you set to examine your selves by any marks or signs: In the first place, examine your Marks that you would try your selves by. If you would prove your selves, whether you have true grace or no, by any mark that is given, examine that Mark by the Scriptures, whether it be a certain and infallible sign of grace, so that you may be bold to conclude, that if you can find this Mark in you, you are undoubtedly in the state of grace. That is a proper mark of true grace, which whosoever hath it, hath grace, and whosoever hath it not, hath not grace. If you take that for a mark of true grace, which is common to Saints and sinners, you may take your selves to have grace when you have none. And if you take a mark so try your selves by, which is proper to Saints, but is not common to all Saints, you may take your selves to have no grace when you have. The former mistake may lose you your peace. This may lose you your souls; therefore Christians be wary here, try your marks before you try your selves by them.

2. For the matter of your enquiry, let it be,
1. Whether you are gotten into the way of life or not; or whether you are translated out of a state of sin and death, into a state of grace and salvation? And if so, then,

2. Whether you be in a thriving or flourishing state; or, in a languishing or decayed state.

To help you in the further tryal, I might only send you back to those directions formerly given, concerning your closure with Christ, whence it will not be difficult to gather some certain marks to try your selves by; but I shall add two or three more, wherein let it not be offensive to any, that I follow that light which I have received from the worthy labors of that faithful Servant of Christ, Mr. Baxter; whence I confess my self to have through mercy, grown into the full acquaintance with mine own heart, and which I shall therefore the rather make use of for the help and benefit of others.

1. *Mark.*

1. Wheresoever there is true Grace, there is an hearty willingness to part with every sin.

The first work of the sanctifying Spirit upon the soul, is the discovering of sin, making it appear to be an enemy; and the first saving work, is the dividing betwixt sin and the soul, making an utter breach betwixt them. The Spirit of God, makes us first to look on sin as an enemy, and then to deal with it as an enemy; to hate it, to fear it, to be impatient at the presence of it, Rom. 7. 24. *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* When the good spirit enters into the heart, from that day forward the soul looks on sin, as *Saul* look't on *David*, when the evil spirit fell upon him; it's said, he eyed *David* from that time forward, he look'd on him with an evil eye, with an envious eye: *Oh that I were once well rid of this David; Oh (saith a Convert) that I were once*

Once well rid of this lust: It's now become to the soul, as the daughters of *Herb* were to *Re-heccab*, Gen.26.35. A grief of mind to it, a weariness to it. I am weary of my life, because of these Daughters of *Herb*.

When there is this breach made betwixt sin and the soul, it's grace that hath made it; when sin hath lost the will, it hath lost the man; when Christ hath gotten the will, he hath gained the man. The will, is the heart; give me thy heart, is the same, as be willing to be mine; The will is the strong hold of the soul; this is it that holds out lust against God; when this is won, all is won: Sin may have lost the understanding, and lost the conscience; these may plead for God, and for holiness, and may cry out against sin, *away with it, away with it, crucify it, crucify it;* there is Death and Hell in the bowels of it, away with it. But as long as sin hath the will for it, it still hath the man. Reason saith, *I ought to turn;* Conscience saith, *I must turn;* but yet nothing follows; but when the heart says, *I will turn*, then the work is done: Reason saith, these idols ought not to stand; Conscience saith, these lusts must be subdued, these my sinful pleasures, these my sinful ways, these my sinful companions, must be left; but when the will says to them, *Get you hence,* there's a work of grace begun: *Get you hence,* But now this willingness to part with, or turn from sin, that sic may infallibly prove grace to be in us; must be, *Universal,* a willingness to be rid of all sin. This notion against sin, that's wrought by grace,

is against the whole kind, against all sin, root and branch, body and members. A true *Israelite*, would not have one *Canaanite* left in the Land, would have the whole generation rooted out, *Psal. 119. I hate every false way, Psal. 139. Search me, O Lord, and see if there be [any] wickedness in me.*

3. Habitual; It must not be only for the time that the heart is set against sin, when it is under some terror or trouble, but there must be an abiding willingness. *Pharaoh*, when the Thunder, and the Hail, and the Fire, and the Frogs, and the Flies, were upon him, for the time was willing to let *Israel* go, but presently after he meant no such thing: *Thou art in a fit, in a fright, or sudden passion, in sickness, or under the apprehensions of death, that will give thee any certain light, by which thou mayest judge of thy state; but what thou art in the standing and abiding disposition and bent of thy soul. A godly man is never unwilling (when he is himself) to be rid of every sin.*

3. Prevalent; The willingness must be greater than the unwillingness. A gracious heart is more willing to be rid of sin, than to continue in sin. He had much rather, if it were put to his choice, live without all sin, than to be allowed to live in any sin. Whatever the pleadings and reasonings of his flesh are, for an indulgence to any particular sins, whatever the advantages of yielding to the flesh herein might be, whatever damages or prejudices might follow upon his parting with them, yet he had much rather, whatever

whatever comes of it, be freed from them all. If the Lord should come to such a soul, and give him as large a grant as he did to Salomon, Ask what I shall give thee; ask what I shall do for thee, write down what thou wile, and thou shalt have it; this is that which he would have, *Lord take away mine iniquities.* 'Tis not the lives of mine enemies, or a revenge upon them that I desire; 'tis not freedom from trouble, or affliction that I desire; make me a clean heart, O Lord, purge me from my sins, let my lusts die, my corruption die, and then though my enemies live, and their malice live, and my troubles live, yet if my sins be once dead, I have my desire. And this willingnesse will discover it self to be prevailing by bringing forth,

1. Resolution,

2. Resistance against sin.

1. Where a man is truly willing to be rid of sin, there will be resolution against it; he will not only be patient and content to give God leave to crucifie all his beloved lusts, and darling covetousnes, and give the world leave to hew and strike home at the root of them, without hiding them, or warding off the blow, or wishing they might be spared to him, but stands steadfastly on Gods side, and taking part with him against sin, resolves to use all his means for the conquering and overcoming of them.

2. This resolution will bring forth resistance. An heart that's weary of sin, will fall to striving against sin, Gal. 5.17. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,* for these two are contrary the one to the other. Contraries are

naturally expell each ot other. Such a pair as a *Jacob* and an *Esau*, such Twins, as an *Isaac* and an *Ishmael*, cannot live quietly together in the same womb, no nor live quietly together in the same house, but there will be a mutual prosecuting and persecuting each of other; fire and water may as well agree in the same vessel, as grace and sin in the same heart. A gracious heart will be restraining, forbidding and withstanding it in all its workings. It's a mere vanity, for men to talk of being willing to be rid of sin, when they let it live, and work, and rule, and run its course, without ever laying the hand to the bridle to restrain it.

Let me add one word more; if you strive against sin, and your striving be attended with success, if you have gotten any degree of victory, the evidence will be much more full and clear.

This now is the first Mark, by which you may try your selves; whether there be the truth of grace in you, or not.

He that is willing to be freed from all sin; habitually willing, prevailingly willing; he that's more willing to be freed from sin, than to be allowed to live in sin, and hereupon is resolved to use all God's means for the conquering of it; and accordingly strives, prayes, watches, and wrestles against it; especially if he finds his lusts begin to fall before him, undoubtedly there is grace in that mans heart. As *Hannah's* Wife said to her Husband, If this *Mordecai* be of the *seed of the Jews*, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him; I shall

be

behold to say to such a person, without any tyme
for ends, this *Adoration* is of the seed of the Jews,
this grace before which thy lusts hays begun to
fall; is the seed of God, and therefore thy sins
shall never totally prevail against it, but shall
finally fall and be destroyed by it.

21. Wherever there is true grace, there is a pre-
ferring in the esteems and choice of a strict and sin-
cere, godly life, above any other life in the world.

22. A godly man loves all godliness, and he loves
it above all, Psal. 19. 9, 10. The fear of the Lord
is clean and endureth for ever, the Judgements of
the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to
be desired are they then gold, yea, then much fine
gold, sweeter also then the honey and the honey-comb;
that is, then all the wold: more to be desired
are they; that is, the fear of the Lord, and the
Judgements of God deserve more respect from
men, are of more value, more worth the desir-
ing and looking after, then gold or honey. Here
are all the advantages of a worldly life put to-
gether in two words; The profits of it, and the
pleasures of it; and the fear of the Lord pre-
terr'd before these all. (*Than Gold*) Gold is all
things; Gold, much gold hath greatness fol-
lowing it: Gold hath glory, all the glory of the
world attending it; Lands, and livings, and
honours, and friends, and all things that a car-
nal heart can desire, are hid in the golden
Mines. Honey notes all the sweetness, pleasures,
and delights of a worldly life: Now, saith the

Psalmist, put all this together, all the revenues, and incomes of a worldly life, together with all its pleasures, and delights; and the fear of the Lord will weigh them down all. Though this foolish world run a madding after money, and pleasure, spend their dayes, waste their lives, prostitute their consciences, throw away their souls upon these things, yet one dram of godliness, one day spent in the fear of the Lord, is better then all this: this the *Psalmist* gives as his Judgement,

Let us next consider what his Choice is : Psa. 4. 6. *There be many that say. who will shew us any good? Lord, let thy light shew us thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in mine heart more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.* Psa. 17. 14, 15. *The men of the world have their portion in this life, their bellies thou fillest with thy bid treasure, they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes; but as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.* The men of this world, as they seek, so they have their portion in this life, they have a glorious and a gallant time of it here, great portions, great possessions, great prosperity; their bellies full of pleasure, enough to spend upon themselves, and to leave to their Children after them; this they have, and much good may it do them: Let me but behold the face of God in righteousness, walk before the Lord in my integrity, keep a good conscience, live in the obedience of his Will, and in the light of his Countenance, and then let them take the corn, and wine,

wine, and what else they can get; let the Lord be mine and I shall never envy them their position; Psalm E 4. 10. *I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of the Lord, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness.* The meanest condition of those that live in the presence and favour of God, I more desire, and would rather have, then the highest condition of others. Let me be a door-keeper amongst the Saints, rather then a dweller with the wicked. So Moses, Heb. 11. 25. *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,* Psalm. 119. 30 111. *I have chosen the way of truth, &c. Thy testimonies have I taken as mine heritage for ever.* Where observe,

1. How he came into the way of Truth: that is, not by chance but by choice; I have chosen the way of truth: There are some that stumble in upon Religion, who being cast into such places or societies where Godliness is in fashion and credit, joyn in to do as others do, and yet their hearts have never chosen Religion: but I have chosen the way of truth, saith the Psalmist.

2. What it is he chose of Religion; *The way of truth, the Testimonies or Precepts of the Lord:* Some there are that have chosen the wages of Righteousness, but not the way of Righteousness, the Promises but not the Precepts of the Lord; as much as you will of the sweat, but none of the sweat of Religion; But I (saith he) have chosen the way of Truth.

3. What

3. What account he hath of what he hath chosen: He accounts it as his *Heritage*: There be some that choose Religion, but it is only for a covering, or a cloak to hide their wickedness, making the same use of it, which a Whore doth of her paint, to hide the deformity that is under: Others take up Religion for their last Refuge; something they must have, to which they may have recourse at last, but they will not have much to do with it, nor take much pleasure in it at present: But he chooses it, not only as his *Refuge*, but as his *Riches*, not only to be the ground of his future hopes, but to be the matter of his present joy.

From all these Scriptures observe,

1. That a godly mans settled Judgement is, That a godly life is the best and happiest life.

2. That a godly mans choice is according to his judgement. He esteems the fear of the Lord above gold, and he chooseth it before gold: He is better pleased, and doth rather take up with the meanest and most afflicted condition, in a way of holiness, than with the most plentiful and prosperous estate; in a way of sin; he prefers the poverty of Christ before the riches of the World.

3. Godly men and worldly men are distinguished, and may be known the one from the other by their choice they make for themselves: He that makes a worldly choice is a worldly man, and he is a godly man that makes a godly choice. Take Godliness with all its inconveniences, with all its difficulties and distresses, when it is most under a cloud of reproach and

con-

contempt; and take a worldly life with all its advantages, preferments, pleasures, in its greatest Sun-shine of outward prosperity and glory; and he is not a godly man, he is not of the *Psal-mists* Spirit, that is not able to say, *Give me this poor, despised, godly life, to sure the most flourishing life of worldlings.*

3. *Mark.*

3. *Whoever hath true Grace doth actually true a godly life.*

The Tree is best known by its fruits, the sincerity of our purposes by our performances: if you think you have chosen a godly life, and yet do not live a godly life, it is a sign you are mistaken, and have not sincerely chosen it: *John 3. 7. 10. He that doth righteousness is righteous; he that doth not righteousness is not of God.*

There is a two-fold Righteousness, and there is a two-fold *doing* Righteousness.

First, There is a two-fold Righteousness: Righteousness is taken,

1. In a strict sense for *Justice*, properly so called, which stands in the due observation of that Rule, *Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.*

2. In a larger sense for *Holiness*, or an universal rectitude of all our actions. To live according to our Rule, the whole Word of God, is to live Righteously: In this Scripture it is taken in this latter and larger sense, He who carries himself holily and unblameably, both in the things pertaining to God, and also in the things pertaining to men, he doth righteousness.

Secondly,

Secondly, There is a two-fold doing Righteousnesse.

1. In a legal sense, which stands in *an exalt obeying and fulfilling the Law*. And thus there is none righteous, no not one; because thus, there is none that doth righteousness.

2. In an Evangelical sense: *A walking uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel*: A sincere endeavor to observe all things which the Lord hath commanded us.

For the further clearing whereof I must make use of a two-fold distinction.

1. I must distinguish betwixt a *single good action*, and a *series of good actions*. It is not one, or a few single good actions, but a continued course of holy actions, that denominates us *holy*. As there is no man so *holy*, who doth not sometimes fall into sin, so there are few men so *wicked*, who do not sometimes fall in with that which is good; and as every sin which a *godly* man, through infirmity falls into, doth not presently denominate him *ungodly*; neither will a few good actions done by another man prove him *godly*. 'Tis what the *course and tenour* of the life, that must be diligently observed. A *godly* man makes godliness the *busynesse* of his *Life*. Religion is a Christians trade, and you may well call it his trade upon a double account.

3. It is his *living and livelihood*; men live upon their trades, a mans trade is his maintenance, his bread, and his clothes, and his lodging, all comes in from his trade: Godliness is a Christians whole living, he *prays*, and he *lives*,

lives by praying ; he believes , and he lives by faith ; he loves , and he lives by love ; all the supports, succors, comforts of this life come in this way . A Christians livelihood is all laid up in Christ , and in the exercises of godliness , he gets it down into his Soul : Take away from a Christian his Religion , take away Faith , and Prayer , and Hope , and Love ; and the labours and exercises of them , and you leave him a poor man indeed ; take away his house , and his means , and yet he lives ; take away his bread , and yet he lives ; but take Faith , and Hope , and Prayer , &c. from him , and he dies .

2. Godliness is *the businesse of this life* : A mans trade is his *constant work* ; not the exercise of now and then a day , or an hour upon occasion , but it is his *every days work* . Godliness , as it is a Christians daily bread , so it is his daily work . Judge not thy self by what thou art in some few holy days of thy life , when perhaps by falling into affliction , or into some good society , or being present at some good Duty , or Ordinance , thou seemest for a fit , to be another man than thou art at other times . Judge not thy self to be what thou art , when thou art not thy self , when thou art but in a fit ; but see what the trade and ordinary way of thy life is ; he that in his ordinary course does righteousness , he is righteous ; *and his businesse*

3. I must distinguish betwixt a Christians actions ; and his care about his actions : the holy actions of some that are really godly , especially of young beginners , may be but few , in comparison , but their care is more continu-
ed :

ed: what the Apostle saith of unmarried persons is true of all Christians; every soul that is married to the Lord careth how to please his Husband: though I do not say, that all carelessness doth conclude we have no grace: yet this I say, it is more then careless Christians can tell, whether they have any grace or not, though such may have grace, yet they can have no assurance. He that finds that the great care of his life is how to please the Lord, is of God.

Try your selves by this Mark also: do not enquire only about your affections, what your desires are, or what your joys are, what your comforts are, or what your peace is, but what your paths are: when all comes to all, this is the surest mark, He that doth righteousness is righteous, he that doth not righteousness is not of God if it be said yea and nay.

Put all these together, and whosoever there is of you that is thus willing to part with sin, doth thus esteem and hath thus chosen a godly life above all other lives, and hath this attested by his actual care in his ordinary course to please God. Oh be thankful, and bless God forever, there is that work of Grace begun in thy Soul, that doth undoubtedly prove thee to belong to God, and is the state of Salvation.

Having faithfully tried your selves by these certain and infallible marks, and proved your selves to be in the state of grace (for I would advise you to bring your tryal to a clear judgment) when proceed in the next place to examine,

2. Whether you be in a thriving and flourishing estate

estate or no? whether you have made a comfortable progress in holiness? or whether you be in a stand or behind hand?

To help you in this, I shall only give you these two or three short directions:

1. Compare your selves with yourselves; your present state with your former state. Look back and consider what you were, or have been at any time since you first believed, and then see what ground you have gotten or lost.

2. Compare your state with your time that you have had, and your means, and opportunities, and the several talents that you have received. See if your stature in grace be answerable to your standing, if you are of seven, or ten, or twenty years standing in the Vineyard of the Lord; consider if you also be of so many years growth: See if your Reckonings you have to bring in be answerable to your receipts? If you have been of long standing and yet are but little of nature: if your knowledge be as little, your faith as weak, your love as cold, your peace, your comforts as uncertain, your corruptions as many and mighty as they haue been many years since, much more if the waters of grace and peace run lower now then they did heretofore, you may conclude your selves to be but in a poor case, and indeed to be out of case.

3. Compare your selves with the best of other Christians, to whom you have been equal in time, and other circumstances. See if you have kept pace with the best of your time. If you see your selves behind your company, much more if you see divers that have set forth after you, to have

out with you and gotten much before you : if you see Christians of less time, or less parts, that have had fewer helps, greater hindrances, to have gotten the start of you ; if those that have been but a few hours in the field, are returning home laden with the sheaves they have gotten, and you that have been there all the day, have gotten only a few poor handfuls, you will have no reason to think it over-well with you.

Christians, you whose case this is, a barren and unthriving case : Oh labour to see it, and to lament it, and to acknowledge it ; I confess it is even thus with me, I confess this is my case, if it be, bewail it, mourn over your neglects, and bemoan your poverty : If you had had a great trade in the world, and a good stock, and good markets, and shouldst trade and trade from time to time and never prosper, but be poor and low, when you see others of the same trade to flourish and grow rich, how near would it go to your hearts ? Christianity is a good trade, Grace is a good stock, the Ordinances of God, under which you have lived, have been good Markets, many that have set up long since you did, are grown rich, rich in Grace, rich in Comfort, rich in good Fruits, and yet that you should still be so poor, and behind hand, this is lamentable, and oh lament over it, and consider, that is time for you now at length to look better to your selves.

That you may get into a better case, examining a little farther, what it is that hath hindered your thriving, and kept you back : some

of these following hindrances, which I shall name in a word to you, some one, or more of them, its very likely, have kept you thus back. Either :

1. A slight and overly performance of holy *Duties* : Duties have a great influence upon the state of our hearts and lives. Look what Christians are in their secret duties, you shall find them much after the same rate, in their ordinary course; if you see a Professor that's dead and barren, and careless, and unsavoury in his life, follow him into his Closets, and you shall (ten to one) find him as slight, and dead, and heedless in his prayers; and those that shift over their duties, will but shuffle in their Conversations. Try if this be not your case. Or,

2. Unprofitable Converse with *Christian Friends* : The Communion of Saints, should be improved to the edification of *Saints*. Christians should find other matters to talk of, then of their Corn and Cattel, the Weather or News : What, have you not a God, nor a Christ, nor a Soul to be minding each other of ? Never a word of your Country, whether you are Travelling ? We should come together, to get light from each others candle, to get warmth from each others fire : If you squander away such opportunities, no wonder if you remain dark and cold : Examine if you be not faulty here ? Or,

3. Unnecessary converse with *Carnal Friends* : Frothy and unsavoury company, leaves a chill, and a damp, and a vanity upon our spirits : It is not for nothing that Christ requires his Disci-

ciples, to *for sake all the world*; Father and Mother, Son and Daughter, much more such carnal friends as are at a greater distance; if we cannot forget these, they will quickly help us to forget our God, and our selves.

Yet Religion doth not teach us to be unnatural, or uncivil, it requires that we give to all their dues, friendship, to whom friendship; courtesie, to whom courtesie, and duty to whom duty belongs; but this it teacheth, that we do not unnecessarily converse with those, whose society we may avoid, nor unwarily with those whom we may not avoid. With whomsoever your dwelling be, let your delight be in the Saints; if God cast you among others, let them be your fear, rather than your familiars; and keep such a due distance, as may neither hinder you in your duties to them, nor prejudice you in your duty to God; examine how it hath been with you upon this account: Or,

4. Overbusying your selves about the affairs of this life: It may be, you find so much work to do abroad, that you let all lie at randome within; It may be, the reason why your heart is so cold, is, because you have so many Irons in the fire, you have so many fields to look too, that your garden is all over-run with weeds: Or,

5. The remaining guilt of some unrepented sin. *Israel* cannot prosper whilst there is an accursed thing in the Camp. Or else,

6. Some unmortified lust that you live under the power of, and yet it may be take no notice of. You have it may be, a proud heart, or an angry

gry fretful heart, or an envious revengeful heart, and this may be it that makes you pine away. An unmortified lust in the heart, is like a Moth in the Garment, that eats out the strength, and mars the beauty of it. Pride in the heart, is as proud flesh in a wound, what ever medicines be used, the wound remains uncured, till the proud flesh be taken off. An angry fretful heart, is like a Wolf in the breast; whatever be applyed, it will prey upon, and devour it, and the body pine away, till the fretting humour be cured: And so any other prevailing lust will have the same effect. As a man in a Consumption, that's wasted to skin and bone, whatever Cordials, or Restoratives he takes, his flesh will never be gotten up, his strength will never return, till the corroding Rheume be staid. If there be any prevailing lust in thy soul, especially if thou indulgest to it, in vain shalt thou use many Medicines, for thou shalt not be cured, till that lust be subdued. Thou mayst pray, and fast, and complain all thy life long, of thy deadness, and barrenness, and languishing state, and yet still be pining away, whilst there is any iniquity that thy heart gives indulgence to. Search diligently, and see if this be not thy case.

7. Slothfulness. The field of the sluggard is a barren field. He that will not plough, nor sow, nor weed, nor watch, nor work in his field, is like to have but a poor crop, *Prov. 24. 30.*

8. Contentedness with thy poor, and low, and barren state. Some that are born poor, live all their days, and take up with their poor state and never look after riches. For ought thou

knowest, thy heart might have been in much better case, if thou hadst intended riches: 'Tis the covetous Christian, that is the rich Christian: As 'tis with worldly men, the *covetous of the earth*, these are the rich men of the earth; these are the moneyed men, the landed men, that have laid house to house, field to field; And it may be, if thou hadst been *spiritually covetous*, thou mightest have laid grace to grace, comfort to comfort, and have been a man of great possessions before this day: but thou hast been a narrow-hearted, poor spirited creature, that never hadst any ambition, nor tookst up any design to grow great and rich towards God, and hereupon 'tis that thou art as thou art.

Christian, though there be none of the former causes mentioned, but may have an hand in bringing poverty upon thee, or holding thee under it; yet it may be this last, a *contentednesse with a little Grace*, is that to which thou owelst most of thy pining disease. This is too common a case with Christians. We have not large hearts towards God, we are not covetous after holiness, we are too well contented to be Babes in Christ, to be Children in the Grace and Knowledge of God; where shall we find a Christian almost, that is *resolved to be rich*; to seek great things for himself, the great things of Eternity I mean, to bring forth much fruit. It is no wonder there are so many *barren sheep* in Christ's *Fold*, so many *barren fig-trees* in Christ's *Vineyard*, so many starvelling souls among the Professors of Religion; when there are so few that do seriously design fruitfulness. We might have been as those sheep, which

which Solomon mentions, to resemble the Church by, Cant. 6. 6. Whereof every one beareth Twins; we might have gotten double to what we have done, if we had had a mind in earnest to it.

Brethren, Consider how it is with you, and if you find this to be your case, that your souls are in an unthriving state, search narrowly if some of the fore-mentioned particulars, be not those that have kept you back; and when you have found out the cause of your disease, rest not till it be removed; for be ye well assured, That, that which hath bindered, will binder, till it be taken out of the way.

The fourth and last Special Duty I shall direct you in, is the *Renewing of your Covenant*: Wherein, before I give you the Directions, I shall premise,

1. That every sincere Christian is (as hath been before shewed) entered into Covenant with God.

2. That Christians are guilty of much *treachery* and false dealing with God! They break Covenant daily. The Lord may take up that complaint against many of us, which he took up against *Israel*, Psl. 78. 36, 37. *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lyed unto him in their tongue; their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in the Covenant.*

There is a double falsehood in the Covenant, which we may be guilty of:

1. There is a falsehood in our entring into *Covenant*; when we do it not heartily, but feignedly, when our promises to God are nothing but words; when we mean not, nor intend any such thing as our mouth speaks; this is lying unto God. *They lyed to him in their Tongues*; Oh how many such lyars are there to be found amongst those that are called Christians! We have all Covenanted to renounce the world, and the love of it, to renounce the flesh, and the lusts of it, to renounce the Devil and his works: We have all Covenanted, to take the Lord to be our God, to cleave to him, obey and serve him onely, and all our dayes: All this we have done in our Baptisme, and in our Profession that we have since made, to stand to our Baptismal Covenant. But have we not, many of us, lyed unto the Lord? Hath there ever been any such thing in our hearts? Those that are *false in this Foundation of their Christianity*, are but *false Christians*; those that have lyed unto God in their *Covenants*, are but *lying Converts*.

2. There is a falsehood in our *keeping Covenant*; when whatever reality there hath been in our intention, yet we fail in *execution*; when we do not stand to our word, nor are stedfast in our Covenant, and every part thereof. And thus every Christian is more or less guilty. Every sin we commit, is in a degree, a breaking Covenant, a departing and going back from the Lord, and a dealing treacherously with the most high. Oh how much falsehood of this kind, is there to be found in every one of us, when some of our hearts are so set upon the world, and take so much

much liberty in pursuing, and so much pleasure in the enjoying of these earthly things, that the Lord is the less regarded and looked after; Is this according to our Covenant? When there is such fleshliness and sensuality to be found amongst others, when we live such idle, easie, careless lives; when our appetites, or passions, our tongues are left so much at their liberty; when there is so much provision made for the flesh, and so little for the Soul: Is this according to our Covenant? Is this all we meant, in promising to be Christians? Is this our living to God, our living to Christ? Oh, what falsehood have we been guilty of!

3. That all our breaches of Covenant, do exceedingly weaken the Bond and Obligation of the Covenant. The Obligation of the Covenant may be said to be weakened in a double sense:

1. *Really*, When the tye of it is relaxed and loosened, and we cease to be so strongly bound as before; and thus no sin can weaken our Covenant-Obligation; it doth not become ever the less our duty, to cleave unto God, for that we have so often departed from him, or ever the less our sin to follow the world, for that we have followed it so long. Our sins in this sense do rather add to the Obligation, by how much the less we have paid off our debt, by so much the more there is behind: Our former neglects do oblige us to the more care for the future.

2. *Sensibly*, When the Bond of the Covenant being so often broken, is not now accounted so Solemn or so Sacred as before; by how much the more it hath been broken, by so much the less

sensible hold hath it upon us. It seemeth but a very light thing, to persons that have so often and ordinarily broken their faith with God, to break it over and over again ; It doth not much affect or trouble such hearts, which have been accustom'd to transgresse, to revolt more and more. When sin can plead prescription, it grows bold. *If I were to begin again (saith the sinner) I would take more care, and look better to my wayes ; but over shooes over boots, now I have gon on so long, it will not be much worse if I go on a little longer.*

4. The Renewing of our Covenant, will revive the Obligation of it. Though there be not a stricter, yet there is another Tye ; There is a new link added to the old cord. Men are more afraid and ashamed to break their word as soon as it is gone forth out of their mouths. The seriousness wherewith such a sacred duty should be performed, will leave some impressions upon the heart. The very considering over our Covenant-breaches, which is necessary to our renewing of it, will awaken our hearts to more care and watchfulness.

These things being premised, I shall give you this double Direction for the performance of this Duty.

1. For the time when.

2. For the manner how.

Touching the former, there are some special times when this Dutie is especially Seasonable : As,

1. Upon your falls into any greater sins. Great sins make great breaches, and 'tis not safe to let them ly'e unmade up. Breaking of Covenant makes

makes a breach upon Conscience, and this will prove as the breaking down the banks of the Sea, which if they be not presently made up, there may be no stopping them.

2. In great straits and afflictions. We have then our hearts at the advantage to bring them back, or to bind them the faster to the Lord, when we stand in any special need of comfort or help from God, Gen. 28. 20, 21. when Jacob fled from his Fathers house for fear of his Brother Esau, he vowed, *If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Fathers house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God.* Times of straits and difficulties are a special season for this Duty: Though it be too ordinary that those vows which we make in the dayes of our distresse are quickly forgotten in the dayes of our prosperity; sickness promises are in our health, like Sampson's withs, broken as tow when it toucheth the fire.

3. In case of any declinings to a careless, remisse, and senseless frame of heart or life.

4. At our approaches to the Table of the Lord. These are some of the special times for the performance of this duty.

2. For the manner how.

1. Remember your Covenant, read over and consider distinctly the terms of it, and weigh diligently the strictnesse and great solemnity of your engaging to God therein, that your hearts may be the more deeply affected herewith.

2. Remember your Faults: Read over and consider distinctly the sins you have fallen into since

since your engaging to the Lord ; together with the several aggravations of them; and repent and be humbled under them, *Isa. 50. 4, 5.*

3. Especially consider how your hearts have stood towards the Lord in the main; whether your falls have not been such as give you occasion to suspect that you were not upright in your first engaging. Consider whether such a life as you have led since, such sins as you have been overcome by since, are consistent with sincerity.

4. Resolve upon more care, watchfulness and faithfulness for the future. Verbal promises, though there appear some affection at the time, if they be not joyned with a resolution to take more care, are like to come to nothing.

5. Have a special eye in your engaging to the Lord, at your special sins, failings and neglects, that you have found your selves more inclined to, and more ordinarily overtaken by. I will through the help of God watch against every sin, but especially against covetousness, passion or lying. &c. This is my sin, herein I am apt to be faulty, here my hardest work lies. I will watch to every Duty, but especially to temperance or patience, or self-denial, herein I have been most wanting.

6. Lay hold on the Covenant or Promise of God, for the renewing of his Grace towards you, for the renewing of your strength, whereby you may be more enabled to perform your promises, and pay your vows. It may be your former experiences of your unfaithful hearts have quite discouraged you. I have found this heart of mine so fickle, and so false, and so feeble, that I dare not trust

trust it so far, as to engage any farther for it. I have found my work so hard, my lusts so strong, my temptations so many, my strength so small, my attempts to follow God so successlesse, that I am afraid I shall never come to any thing: I doubt I shall but mock God, and bring more guilt upon my self, by adventuring to promise any thing farther for this sinful, infirm, and unfaithful heart. Why, though thou darest not trust thy heart, yet trust thy God, who hath said, *That he will put his fear into thee, that thou shalt not depart from him, that he will renew thy strength, and that his Grace is sufficient for thee.* Depend upon God for the renewing of thy strength, and then fear not to renew thy Vows.

7. In this strength of the Lord, go into his presence, and with sorrow in thine heart, and shame in thy face, falling down before him, humbly confess and acknowledge thy falls and failings, and then in the like Solemn manner as thou hast been before directed, engage thy self again to the Lord in the same Covenant.

2. I shall next direct you to make a right improvement of Duties.

Godliness doth not stand barely in Praying, Meditating, or Examining: There is something further that these Duties have a respect, and must be useful to, 'Tis an *holy life*, that is the end to which our holy duties are to lead, and help us on. That they may do so, take these two following Directions.

1. *When ever you set upon Duties, resolve to put heart for it, to enjoy such sensible communion with God in them, that you may come off in a better and*

nd more spiritual frame of heart then you came on.

2. Having gotten up your hearts to any better frame in Duty, be careful to keep it up after Duty.

When ever you set upon Duties, resolve to pur-
hard for it, to enjoy such sensible Communion with
God, that you may return from them with some ad-
vantage upon your spirits. Resolve with him, Nun-
quam à te absque te recedam, when ever I come
before the Lord, I will never go away without
him.

The Reason why we thrive no more by Duties,
is, Because we do not *meet our God in them*: God
never meets with his Saints, but he sends them
away with some marks of his Goodnesse upon
them.

The Reason why we so seldom meet with
God in ~~our~~ Duties, is, because we do not so
wisely ~~look~~ *his appearance*. God waits for thy
coming, son, and if it be not thy fault, thou
mayest see his face before thou departest; and if
thou see God in a Duty, thou wilt not then re-
turn without some impressions of God upon thy
heart.

When Moses came down from the Mount,
where he had seen the Lord, *his face did shine*,
there was something of the glory of God upon his
countenance: *Israel* might plainly see that Moses
had met with God, they might see the beams of
Divine Glory in his face. Oh how sad is it, that
Christians should return from Duty with no more
of God in their faces, or upon their spirit, then
for the most part they do. We come many times with

with no other spirits from our Bibles, or our Closets, then we come out of our Shops, or out of our Barns, no body would ever think we had been praying, or conversing with God, there is so little favour of God upon our hearts, that we bring back with us.

Brethren, when ever you let down your pitchers into the Wells of Salvation, be not content to bring them up empty : be so conversant with God in your Duties, that you may come off laden, as the Bee from the flower, with the honey and sweetnes of your Duties.

And this I advise you to endeavour after, not only in your secret Duties, nor only in your solemn publick Duties, on Sabbaths, Humiliation-dayes, or Thanksgivings, but in your daily Family Duties, your Reading, Singing, Praying, yea, even in those shorter Prayers and Praises which you use before and after Meals. When ever you draw nigh to God, look to see God, to taste of God, and to get down something of God upon your hearts, And then,

2. *What ever you have gotten from God in Duty, what life, what warmth, what refreshing, what enlargement of heart, be careful to maintain and keep it alive afterwards:* See that your spirits do not presently sink and cool again, after they have been thus raised and warmed. Do not satisfie your selves with this, that you have some comfortable entertainment with God, and feel some warm and lively workings of your heart towards God, and some refreshings from him in Duty; but look to it, that you keep that holy fire that is there kindled, from being presently quenched again:

You

You do not eat and drink for an hour only, that you may have the comfort of your food while your meal lasts, but you eat for afterwards, that the spirits and the strength which you get by one meal may hold you out to the next meal. Duties are the set meals of the soul, wherein it so feeds it self upon God, that in the strength of what it receives it may afterwards walk with God more comfortably and cheerfully.

The Lord promiseth to his People, *Lev. 26. 5.* *The Threshing shall reach to the Vintage, and the Vintage to the Seed-time.* And *Amos 9. 13.* *The Ploughman shall overtake the Reaper, and the Treader of Grapes him that soweth Seed.* The meaning is, Your old store shall be so much, and last you so long as still new come again; You shall not only reap enough for the time of *Harvest*; you shall not only gather enough to serve you during the time of the *Vintage*, but your Corn shall last from *Harvest* to *Harvest*; your Wine shall serve you from *Vintage to Vintage*; your Old store, shall not be spent till New come to supply you. Duties are the *Harvests and Vintages* of our Souls: Oh what blessed lives should we live, did we so improve and husband what we get in one Duty, that it might last us out to another; that the *Vintage* might reach to the *Vintage*, the *Harvest* to the *Harvest*; that the life, and warmth, and refreshing we get in one Duty, might hold by us till the *next*, and so we might be carried on in an holy, lively, heavenly Frame from *Duty to Duty*, as *Israel* walked on from *strength to strength*, till they came and appeared before God in *Sion*.

That

That which holds us so low and barren in Religion is, that whatever we have obtained from the Lord in Duties and Ordinances, we presently lose it : when we have been weeping sometimes before the Lord, and wrestling with him, and pleading hard for some quickning or comforting influences of his Spirit upon our hearts, and the Lord hath heard us and given us our desires ; yet, then as soon as duty is over, we go away and forget all, and bury all that we have thus obtained, in a confused heap of worldly thoughts and busynesses ; we unbend, and let down our spirits, and lay aside all thoughts of God till we come to duty again ; we content our selves to live in such an estrangement from God all the rest of our time, that sin and the world have *a whole dayes time to pull down what an hours duty hath been building ; a whole weeks time to destroy and steal away what a Sabbath hath gotten in* ; and so at the returnes of duty we find our hearts at the same losse, in the same deadnesse and hardnessse that they were before.

In the Old Testament, though the Sacrifices were offered but *morning and evening*, yet the fire that kindled them was not to go out *night nor day* ; there must be fire kept alive from the Morning-Sacrifice to kindle the Evening-Sacrifice, and fire left from the Evening to kindle the Morning-Sacrifice : Oh Beloved, how often is it, that though at our Morning-Sacrifice a fire is kindled, yet we let this fire lie all day under the ashes, and take so little care to keep blowing at it, that it goes quite out before the Evening ; and when we come to offer our Evening-Sacrifice, we have no fire to kindle it.

Bre-

Brethren, hath the Lord visited you, and quickened, and comforted you in duty : O! think with your selves what a sweet life should I live, might it be thus with me always? What pity is it, that such light should ever go out ? that such grace should be so short liv'd ? Why, if I do not look to my self the better, this Sun-shine will last but a little while : & how will the Lord take it, if I suffer such sparks that he hath kindled so suddenly to be quenched ? How is my Soul ever like to prosper, if such precious food pass away from it as soon as it is received ? *Is this a fast that I have chosen, for a man to afflict his Soul for a day ?* Is this a prayer that God regards, for a man to afflict his heart for an hour ? to be in the Mount with God, to be raised up to Heaven for the time, and within a few minutes after to be sunk into the dirt of the earth ? What a sad change is this ? How can you bear such a losse as this ? When will your souls come to any thing, if you have only some few such *lucida intervalla*, and all the rest of your time are covered over with clouds and darkness.

Beloved, as ever you expect to prosper in grace, or be settled in peace, be chary of maintaining your *duty in-comes* ; do not think to make use of your prayer-comforts to save you the labour of an after care, but to help you to be more careful and fruitful.

But how may we do to keep this holy and lively frame ?

1. Be watchful, *Nehem. 4. 9.* Nevertheless we prayed, and set a watch against them night and day. Beloved, it is with you as it was with those Jewes, whatever you have gained, you have Adversaries

versaries lying in wait to steal it away ; what ever you have built, you have adversaries lying in wait to pull down again. I have heard of some enchanted places, where what men built in the day, the devil pull'd down at night, and this danger you are continually in , what's built at one prayer, the devil labors to pull down before the next. Let your ey be much upon your hearts, observe diligently , how they hold up or sink, that if there be the least damp or decay, growing upon you , you may espy it *before it be gone too far:* 'Tis no wonder we lose all upon such a sudden, when ordinarily , as soon as ever our duties are done, away we go, and think no more where we have been, or what we have been about; as if we were well content to *take our leave of our duties, and our God together.* When you depart out of your Clossets , leave your hearts behind you ; Worldlings seldom bring their hearts thither ; when they come to play , they *leave their hearts behind them:* Let Christians never carry them thence, when you have done praying , and must abroad to your earthly affaires, *let your hearts stay behind with your God;* let your thoughts be much upon the entertainment you have had; see to it, that the temptations you meet with, do not so easily divert you from minding what you have been begging, or wrestling for.

2. Make present use of what you have obtained ; God gives grace, and strength, and life , for use , and use will preserve it. Hath the Lord warmed thy heart, go warm thy Brothers heart , and that will keep thine from cooling : Hath God spoken comfortably to thy soul, go

and speak of thy God, and what he hath done for thee to others. Hath God inclined, and thereby fitted thee for action, take the season : thou mayest do more for God and for thy soul in such an hour, then in many dayes beside ; be doing with what thou hast received, and thou needest not fear losing it : when we are idle then we *fall asleep* and grow cold : Instruments do not rust while they are in use. We never more spend our strength, then when we spare our labour.

3. Lift up your hearts often to the Lord every hour in some short Ejaculations. No busines, no company can hinder this duty, and this will be of special advantage to you, therefore neglekt it not : Every sigh, or breathing of your souls Heaven-wards, will fetch down fresh influences from Heaven upon you.

4. Charge this whole course actually upon your selves every morning, and examine every evening how you have kept to it.

5. If you cannot otherwise bring or hold your selves to this course, bind your selves to it for some time, by *special vow* ; till bring a while inured to it, it may become at length more easie.

Being thus entred upon, and prepar'd for a godly life, I shall give you some directions.

3. How to carry it on ; and for your help herein, take these following counsels.

I. *In your whole course pursue, and as much as possible, eye your end, God and your own salvation.* Consider often wherefore you live, and what it is you would have ; and if this be it, that God may be honoured, and your souls saved, let this be

be pursued and prosecuted in all the parts of your life. Take not that course, do no such action, that hath not some tendency that way, and that which hath a tendency, let it be directed to that glorious end. Let every arrow be levell'd at your mark: The reason why the end is no more attained, is because it is no more intended; 'tis no wonder we shoot short or beside our mark, when our eye is not upon it.

The eying our end, will both direct our course, and quicken and encourage us on.

Set the Lord much before your eyes, dwell upon the contemplation of his Glory, and glorious Excellencies: Consider how worthy the Lord is to be exalted, and what an honour it is to poor creatures to be any way serviceable to his Honor; and what pity it is, that any of your time, any of your strength should be spent upon vanity, which might be improved to so worthy and high an end? Begrutch every minute of your time that is not bestowed on God.

Consider the blessedness of living for ever in the presence and enjoyment of God. Look towards the holy City, enter by faith into the holy of Holies, set your selves before the throne of God; view (as much as at this distance you are capable) that everlasting light, those blessed and glorious joyes, those rivers of pleasure, that exceeding eternal weight of glory which is there possessed by the Saints, and then lay to your hearts, Come on soul, come on, here's that thou art praying for, here's that thou art labouring for, here's the Country, the Kingdom, the Crown that thou art fighting for, and wrestling for, and running and suffering for.

The setting this glory before your eyes, will both quicken & sweeten your holy course, and take off your hearts from any other course; the end puts a beauty upon the means, & a blackness upon all the hindrances of its attainment. A sight of Heaven will make a holy life a beautiful life.

There are two things that make an holy life beautiful.

1. That is the Image of an Heavenly life.

2. That its the way to it.

All the labors, difficulties, sufferings of a godly life, are therefore pleasant and beautiful, because they are the way of the Kingdom.

And on the other tide, a sight of Heaven, will make the ways of sin to be unpleasant, to be dark and black ways.

There are two grounds upon which sin is odious to the Saints.

1. Its *Opposition* and unlikeness to God ; it bears the Image of Hell upon it, not of Heaven.

2. Its *Interposition* betwixt them and their end.

Nothing else can ever keep them from God; There's no danger of their falling short of Everlasting blessedness, but by sin. This is the only *Gulf* that's fixed between them and Glory. And hence 'tis that the way of sin, with all its pleasures, ease, and delights, is to the Saints, a *dark and dismal way*. The pleasures of sin are *black pleasures*, the gains of sin are *black gains*, the jollity, and liberty, and prosperities of sin, are all *dark and black in their eye*. These Clouds; whatever brightness there seems in them, do keep the Sun from shining on them.

Oh

Oh what progress might you make in the way of Life, were Holiness with all its difficulties become beautiful, and sin with all its delights become odious! What would there then be wanting, that might encourage you on, what would there be then left to hinder you? Why, let God & Glory be more in your eyes, and then sin will be more odious, holiness will be more precious in your eye; you would then neither want encouragements to lead you on, nor be incombered with such temptations, as now keep you back, Tit. 2. 11. 12, 13. *The grace of God (which bringeth Salvation) teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously &c. Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* 2Cor. 4. 16, 18. *For the which cause we faint not, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* Before he had declared how hard 'twas with them, troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, &c. notwithstanding, saith he, we faint not, --- while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen.

Brethren, look on the things not seen, and take from them both *direction* in your way, and *encouragement* to go on in it.

1. Take Direction from Heaven; when you are travelling, and see the place before you whether you are going, your eye will tell you your way. When you are entering upon any Course, then look up and consider, is this my way to God? When you are eagerly and greedily pur-

suing the world, ask your hearts : Is this my way to Heaven ? Am I now working out my salvation ? When you are walking in the way of carnal pleasure or liberty, then look up to the Lord, and look in upon your heart, and say if you can, *Now Lord, I am hastening to thee, now Soul, I am taking care for thee, my sports, and my pleasures, and my lusts, are the way to make God sure, and Heaven sure to me :* Can you say so ? Will not your own heart tell you, this is not the way ? If Heaven be it that I intend, if Salvation be it I mind, sure then I am not out of my way ?

2. Look Heaven-ward, and take encouragement thence to go on. View the glory that is above, and consider what happy men you would be, if you were once safely there ; and let such thoughts press you to hasten on and encourage you against all the labors and difficulties you must first pass through : Think with your selves, when you are setting upon any duty, If I can get well through this duty, I shall be one step nearer Heaven ; When you come to the beginning of every day, think with your selves, If I can spend this day well, I shall this Evening be gotten one days journey nearer home ; when you are falling into any trouble or affliction, If I can cut my way well through this wave, I shall be so much nearer Harbor.

Every new degree added to your grace, is another stone laid up upon the building of glory, every holy Day you have rightly performed, you are gotten one round higher in Jacobs Ladder, look how many days you have walked with God, so many

many dayes journey you are nearer your rest : Look how many troubles and temptations you have gotten Christianly through, so many gulfs have you shot, so many rocks have you passed by towards your harbour.

Oh, if such thoughts and considerations were continually upon your hearts, and before your eyes, how strangely would they quicken you, and encourage you on your way ? Consider, Christians, and thence take courage, after a few days more, a few duties more, a few waves more, you will be safely landed in your Country. *Lift up your eyes and see, and then, lift up your heads and rejoice to see, how by every duty and difficulty, your redemption draweth nigh.* A Traveller in his Journey, that's almost spent and tired, if he once comes within *sight of home*, and be almost there, this adds new strength and life, and on he goes again a main. Let your eye be more on your home, and there will be less loitering or weariness in your way.

II. *Walk on your way in the Name of Christ.* Or, live by Faith, Gal. 2.20. *The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God.* The strength of a Christian is his Faith ; the strength of Faith is Christ ; the strength of Christ is put into the Promiser. If you would live to God, live by Faith ; if you would live by Faith, go often to the Promises.

1. Study the Promises, the freeness of them ; there's *Grace* in the Promise : The fulness of them, there's *Christ* in the Promise, and with him all things ; there's *wisdom, righteousness, strength* ; there's *bread, and cloaths, and lands*,

and friends, and safty; study the *sureness* of the Promises, there's an *Yes* and *Amen* set to them; *All the Promises of God are Yes and Amen.*

2. Set thy *Seal* to them. Believe that God is *true*.

3. Clear up thy interest in them, and thereby make it out that they are *sure to thee*.

4. Treasure up in thy memory, a stock and store of particular promises, which may answer every case of thy life, that so thou mayest have a word always at hand to rely upon. And then,

5. Upon the credit of that word, venture on after thy Lord in any duty, though in suffering he call thee to, Whatsoever difficulty thou seest in thy work, whatsoever danger thou seest in thy way, whatsoever want, or weakness thou seest growing upon thee, go on, resting upon Christ for success in thy duties, and support under thy trouble, and supply of thy wants, according to his Word.

It may be when thou lookest before thee upon an holy life, thou wilt say, this is indeed a beautiful and blessed life, if I could attain to it; but oh, I see there is so much to be done, & so much to be born, that I am in great doubt how I shall ever be able to go through it.

The Lord requires me, if I will come after him, to *deny my self*; This first step puts me to a stand; I doubt I shall stumble and fall at the very Threshold of Christianity. Deny my self! Alas, I cannot deny my friend, or companion, I cannot deny mine Enemy that entices me, to sin. If Satan do but speak a word to me, to draw me aside to iniquity, he presently prevails; and

and must I yet deny my self, when I see how unable I am to deny mine enemies, I cannot, I cannot do it. Why, here thy faith, if thou wilt consult with it, wil furnish thee with this encouragement. Though thou art able to do nothing of thy self, yet thou mayst be able to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth thee, Phil. 4.13.

Again thou sayest, The Lord requires me to make me a clean heart, to purge my conscience, crucifie my lusts. But who am I that ever I should think of doing such great works? I could as easily make a new world as a new heart; I can as well stop the Sun in its course, as stop my lusts in theirs; I can as easily dry up the fountains of the great deep, as cleanse the fountain of my corrupt heart, and purge my self from an evil conscience. I, but now thy faith will tell thee, He that bids thee cleanse thy heart hath said to thee, Ezek. 36.25. That he will sprinkle clean water upon thee, and thou shalt be clean from all thy filthiness. Thy faith will carry thy fountain (of) sin to that fountain that is opened for sin and for uncleanness, Zech. 13. 1. Wherein thou mayest wash and be clean: thy faith will tell thee, Thy old man is already crucified with Christ, Rom. 6. 6. By whom the body of sin is destroyed, that is, hath received its deaths wound, that thou mayest not serve sin, and that the same mouth that commands thee, Let not sin reign in thy mortal body, the same mouth hath promised thee, Sin shall not have dominion over thee.

But yet thou addest, The Lord commands me to keep my heart, to keep my tongue, mine eyes, make strait steps to my feet, that I turn aside to no iniquity,

iniquity, that I turn aside from all temptations to him, abstain from all appearances of evil; and many more the like words hath he given me in charge, requiring me to walk in all his Commandments, and to keep all his Statutes and Judgments, to do them; these are hard sayings, who can hear them? I, but he that said this, (faith faith) said one word more that will make all this easie, *Ezek. 36. 37. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments and do them.*

Once more thou repliest, But Christ commands me to take up my Crosse, to suffer with him, to part with all I have, to lay down my life for his Name. Can I do so little for his Name, and am I ever like to be able to suffer for his Name? Am I put so hard to it in every light affliction that befalls me, and is it possible I should be able to resist unto blood? The Lord pardon me, I have found that a little shame or reproach is more then I can well bear: a scoff or a scorn for Christ, to what impatience hath it often put me? Have I run with the foot-men, and have these wearied me, how then shall I contend with horses? But God is faithful, *1 Cor. 10. 13. who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* The Lord will lay on thee (faith Faith) no more then thy load; either he will increase thy strength, or not increase thy burthens: He that hath given thee a little strength to go through small tryals, hath said, he will, and thou mayst trust him, if he lay more load on thee, give thee more strength to bear it. The Lord will either inable thee to

die for his Name, or he will not call thee to it.

Christians, believe God, to him that believes all things are possible, and if you believe they shall be so to you: He hath said he will be, and therefore you may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper.* Trust in the Lord, and keep his way; trust in the Lord, and be doing good, and verily you shall be fed, verily you shall be assisted, verily you shall be supported; commit your way to him, and whatever difficulty there be in your work he shall bring it to passe: commit the keeping of your selves to him, and you shall be kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Faithful is he that hath called you, and will do it: Distrust your selves as much as you will, but distrust not your Rock: you are weak creatures, but you have a strong God: you have empty hearts but a full Saviour: you have but a poor stock in your selves, but a rich stock in the Promise, whence you shall have such a continual supply, that your barrel of meal shall not waste, nor your cruse of Oil spend, till you have finished your work and your course. Hang on your crucified Lord, take hold on his Covenant, take hold on his Strength, go forth in his strength and Name, and then fear not; your difficulties shall vanish, your way shall prosper, your Souls shall flourish, you shall have your fruit unto Holiness, and your end everlasting Life.

III. *Deny your selves, Matth. 16. 24. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.* Remember your Covenant, you have given your selves

selves to the Lord, and are now no longer your own; you are not debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh; you owe your flesh no observance, you have already paid it more then its due; let him that liveth live to the Lord; let them for whom Christ died live no longer to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.

Christ and self are contrary; you cannot serve these two Masters: if you will not deny yourselves, you cannot but deny your Lord, & if you can deny yourselves in any thing, you will deny Christ in nothing: if you can heartily say, *Not my will*, you will easily add, *but thine be done*.

But what is this self we must deny? I answer, As Christ said to the Woman of Samaria, *He whom thou hast for thy Husband is not thy Husband*: That which thou holdest for thy self is not thy self; thou callest it, & countest it thy self, & lovest, and cherishest it as thy self, but it is not thy self. That which is here called thy self, is elsewhere in Scripture called thy flesh, thy corrupt or carnal part; that corruption that is gotten into thy understanding, and sits there, *giving thee evil counsel*: That corruption that is gotten into thy will, & sits there, swaying thee in all things to *choose thy hurt*; that is gotten into thy appetite, and makes thee to fall a lusting after all things that are pernicious to thee, & a resisting all that would do thee good. This is thy self to be denied, the corruption of thy nature, that hath insinuated it self into all thy parts & powers, and governs thee in all thy actions. This is it which carries thee from God, keeps thee from Christ, resists the Word of Life, leads thee out of the way of life, leads thee about after

after thy pleasures, and sports, and companions, hold thee down to this earth, and is dragging thee to Hell.

This is it which makes sinners say concerning the Word of Life, *The Word that is spoken to us in the Name of the Lord we will not do, but will do whatsoever proceeds out of our own mouths* : That makes them say concerning Christ, *We will not have this man to reign over us*: Let the World reign if it will, let the Devil reign if he will, let Pride, and Envy, and Malice reign if they will; but whosoever reigns, this man shall not reign over me. 'Tis this which lays so many blocks, creates so many difficulties in the way of Holiness ; makes this way seem too strait and narrow, the duties of it impossible, the troubles of it intollerable. Were it not for this, the way of Christ would be easie, and his burthen light : This is that Self which must be denied if you would follow Christ,

If you ask what it is to *deny self*? In short, it is to shake off its government, to resist its reasonings, to disobey its commands, to refuse to follow its inclinations, or satisfie its lustings.

Brethren, whatever Christ counsels you to, or commands (as I told you) this self will be reasoning agaist it, & counter-manding it. When Christ says, Be humble, be watchful, be circum-spect, be perfect. labor, run, strive, suffer; Your flesh will contradict, This is an hard Master, these are hard sayings; all this is both needless and intollerable : Shake off thy heavy yoke and take thy liberty; turn out of this strait way, and take thy course *quit thy self, spare thy self, and put not thy self*

self to such hard service when thou mayest be free: At least thou mayest abate something of this strictnesse: If thou wilt be hol^g what need so much care and labor about it? Allow thy self some liberty, some ease, some pleasure: And if you yield in a little, then it will counsel you to take a little more, and a little more, and never give over till it hath reasoned you out of all Christianity, and commanded you into very Brutes or Devils.

But what shall we do, or how shall we deal with this Self when it thus sets upon us?

Why, return the same Answer to it as Christ did to Peter, when he gave him the like counsel, *Master, pity thy self. Get thee behind me Satan* (saies he) *Hold thy peace Devil, Speak no more thus to me: say to this Flesh as the men of Sodome said to Lot, Gen. 19. Stand back: This fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a Judge, or a Ruler.* Thou art stollen in, I know not how, stollen into my head, stollen into my heart, and now thou thinkest to be a Counsellor, to be a Ruler. Stand back (*Flesh*) hold thy peace, for I may not hearken to thee. Say to it as the King of *Israel* said concerning the Prophet, *I hate him, for he never speaks good to me, but evil:* Say to this wicked *Flesh*, as those wicked ones said against the Lord, *The word which thou hast spoken to me I will not do:* the liberty thou demandest thou shalt not have: the pleasure and the ease which thou cravest I will not allow thee: my Lord whom thou counseleſt me against shall be my Lord, him will I love, him will I obey, him will I follow in all that he

shall

shall say to me : I will not pamper this *Flesh*, but pinch it the more ; I will not humour this fleshly mind, but crosse it the more ; I will not feed this fleshly appetite, but hold it the shorter for its cravings and lustings ; I will not Pray the less, or Fast the less, or Hear the less, because this *Flesh* is against it, but will Pray the more, and Fast the more, and beat down this body, and bring it into subjection with the more care and diligence. I will starve this proud beggar, and weary it out of its impious demands ; it shall get nothing, if I can help it, by all this ado it makes, but shall rather be held the shorter ; I will the rather deny my self what I may allow my self, because I will not feed or foster such an enemy.

Oh Christians ! What an exact life might we live, and with what ease might we go on our holy course, if this enemy were once well laid ? What an uncontrowled dominion might our Lord have over us if this self were pulled down from sitting with him in the throne ? And how much might be done to the destroying of it by our constant denying it ? Keep the *flesh* low, and by degrees you kill it.

But wot o us, what Friends are we of this Enemy, how gently do we deal with this old man ? What provilion do we make for this *Flesh* ? What we have a mind to we must have ; what we have a mind to do we will do ; whether we have a mind to go we will go, and seldom give our Reasons or our Consciences liberty to say to us, *What dost thou ?* or once to judg, whether it be good for us, or fit for us, or safe for us, or no ?

no? We are just like some fond Parents, if their Childe cry, though it be but for a knife, or a handful of dirt, it must have it to still it. A wise Parent will rather give his Childe a Rod then that which will hurt it, and knows that this will be hurt enough, that a Child should always have its will: Oh check and whip this Brat, and let not thy Soul spare for its crying. Better the child cry then the Parent; better the Flesh cry, then the Soul and Conscience.

But oh what a sad wonder is it to observe, how strangely indulgent too many Christians are this way, who suffer their flesh to lead them almost to any thing, who in a self-seeking flesh-pleasing life have equalled and even out-gone many of the carnal world. What a liberty have many that seem to be Christians, even of the highest form, often taken in the days of their prosperity; some seeking great things for themselves, driving so hard after estates, honor, high places, &c. as if they meant to return and take their portion with the men of this world. Others living in pleasure with Solomon, Eccl. 2.10. Whatever their eyes desire they keep not from them, they withhold not themselves from any joy. Who, as if they hoped to charm their flesh out of its enmity, or to kill it by kindness; or if this were the enemy, which when it hungers they must feed, when it thirsts they must give it drink, and thereby heap devouring coals upon its head; will not say it nay when ever it craves: Oh what liberty have we seen taken by many such, for excessive feastings, costly attire, vain fashions, frothy, light and carnal merriments;

yea,

yea, and despisings, and condemnings of the stricter, and more self-denying way of more severe and mortified Christians ; as if this proceeded out of an affectation of a voluntary *humility*, or an *ignorance of their Christian liberty*.

But is this indeed the way to crucifie the flesh ? Or have you gotten it so much under command already, that now you can securely trust it with anything it would have, without fear of its getting head, and making war against Christ, or your Souls again ?

Look to your selves, Christians ; look back, and consider, whether your Souls have not suffered, whilst your flesh hath been thus *surfeited* ; whether there have not been some *abatements* made to Christ, for every such *allowance* granted to the flesh ; and whether God hath not been provoked, whilst self hath been thus pleased. Think sadly, whether this abuse of our liberty be not something that the Lord is now pleading with us about, and scourging us for. We have even put the Lord to it, to cast us into the *House of Mourning*, thereby to repair the breaches that have been made upon our Souls in our *House of Feasting* : And our Lord Jesus puts us the harder to our second Lesson, *Take up your Cross* ; because we did no better learn our first, *Deny your selves*.

IV. *Order your selves aright*. Beloved, if you will observe the former Rules well, all that remains will be the more easie, and I shall be the shorter in it. *Order your selves aright* ; in those things I mean, that especially concern your own persons ; keep your own hearts with all diligences,

gence, look well to your own ways, Gal.6.4: Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another. Keep a strict and severe eye upon yourselves, hold a strict hand upon your selves, be more severe towards your selves, then towards all the world: It's an ill sign, to see Professors of Religion severe in their observing, imposing upon, and censuring of others; and more remiss towards themselves. Be more candid and charitable towards others, but exercise more severity at home.

In the right ordering your selves, take great care, That you,

1. Allow not your selves in the least known Sin.
2. Live not in the neglect of any known Duty.
3. Take heed of the World.
4. Be Humble.
5. Be Temperate.
6. Be Moderate.

1. That you allow not your selves in the practise of the least known Sin. Do not look on this as any Apology for Sin, or your easier entertaining of it, That it is but a little one.

There is no Sin that can properly be termed little. The least iniquity will cost either the Cloud of Christ, or the blood of your own Souls.

Little sins are spreading sins, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump: Elijah's Cloud, out of the bignesse of a mans hand, in a few hours cloathed the whole heavens in black: You will find

find it something in your Repentance, which you counted as nothing in the Commission.

Little sins are *leading sins*; the child convey-ed in at the window, will open the door to let all the great Thieves in. When Gad came into the world, his Mother said, *Behold a Troop com-eth*, 2 King. 6. 32. When the Messenger of the King of *Israel* came to the Prophet, Shut the door, hold him fast (says he) at the door; *Is not the sound of his Masters feet behind him?* Shut the door against every sin, for whose Messenger is it? Look behind, and see who comes after; *Is not the sound of his Masters feet behind him?* The Devil is not far off, when ever Sin knocks for admission; and the door being o-pened to the *Messenger*, it's like to stand open for the *Master* to enter: Take heed, Brethren, that you do not give a *toleration* to any sin; little sins *allowed*, become great sins. The al-lowance of sin is that which makes the great wast upon conscience, and the great spoil upon our peace. I will not s.y, what grace there *may* be in the heart, but sure there is but little ten-derness in the conscience, that doth not bid defiance to the least of sins.

Beloved, if sin doth get the possession at any time of your heart, let it be rather upon *sur-prize then surrender*; be so watchful, that if it be possible, you may not be surpriz'd by sin, or taken at unawares; but whatever you do, see you do not surrender your selves to it; be so jealous, that if it may be, Sin may not steal in upon you in a disguise, but when you see what it is, beware of it as of the Devil: Will you

Let a known Enemy lodge within you; brethren, do not shut your eyes against sin, nor open your doors to it. Shut not your eyes against it, be willing to know it, do not go about to persuade your selves concerning any thing you have a mind to, that it is not sinful, that it may be lawful enough, for ought you know, but examine it, and look through it impartially, and if you find it to be sin receive it not in. I cannot well say, whether of the two be in the worse case, those that are not willing to know what they do, or those that do what they know to be evil; but this I can say, that neither the one nor the other (if there be any thing of God in them) are like to know whether there be or no; such *winkings* will blind their eyes, and such *walkings* will blot their evidences, and both hinder that progress in holiness, which is necessary to build them up in comfort. If you would be sure the Lord is yours, keep close to him, if you would keep close by God, keep clear of sin, and if you would keep clear of sin, keep your windows open, but your door shut; see who 'tis that knocks, before you let him in. An open eye, and a tender conscience, will be the best security to both your grace and peace.

2. *Live not in the neglect of any known duty:* The devil may be served not only by your doing evil, but by your doing nothing. We obey the will of the flesh, when we only neglect to obey the will of God: As our commissions starve, so our omissions starve our souls. God will not, and our souls cannot want a duty; our *languishings* in our practise, will quickly appear in the *leanness* of our souls.

Omissions will be reckoned for at judgement, and therefore must be reckoned and repented of now. Do not content your selves with a *negative holiness*, that you do no harm; do not think it enough, to be able to say, *I know nothing by my self, no hurt that I have done; suppose you do not, yet thereby are you not justified.* God will judge you, and may condemn you, for what you have (*not*) done. If you had nothing to answer for, but your *neglects*: The neglects of one day, of one hour, will undo you for ever, if you have not a Christ to answer for you. To be holy hath more in it, than to be harmless. There must be doing *your duty*, as well as departing from iniquity, Isa. 1.16. *Cease to do evil, learn to do well.*

Nor is it a little now and then that will serve; There must be continuance in well-doing, a readiness to *every* good work, a fruitfulness in good works, a faithfulness in good works. *Well done good and faithful servant.* That's a faithful servant, that hath done his best, that hath not *voluntarily* neglected *any thing* of his Masters work, nor wasted any of his Masters talents; that's able to say, though I have not done what I ought, yet I have endeavoured to do what I can. Every neglect is a degree of unfaithfulness. If ye will be the servants of Christ, be faithful servants; and that you may be so,

1. Neglect not *any kind of duty*; One thing lacking, may be the lots of all. You can hear it may be, but you cannot pray; you can pray in secret, but you cannot pray in your families; you can instruct your families, but you cannot

govern them ; you can love the Saints, you say, but you neglect the communion of Saints ; you can be just in your dealings, but you cannot be charitable ; you can give an alms to an hungry body, but you cannot give counsel to a sinful soul ; you can give counsel, but you cannot give a reproof ; this or that you cannot bring your heart to ; but take heed, though you cannot bring your heart to it, yet neglect not to be working your heart to it, to be persuading, and reasoning, & praying your heart to it, take heed there be not *an act of indulgence* passed for this neglect : take heed you do not say, *the Lord pardon me in this thing*, and so give off, and let it alone.

2. *Neglect not any opportunity of duty.* When ever the Lord calls to duty, let your heart answer : when ever the Lord opens a door for any service, take the season.

1. Be watchful, and observe every opportunity. Sometimes the Lord puts *thine enemy into thine hand*, gives thee some special advantage against such a lust or corruption : sometimes the Lord puts *a price into thy hand*, an opportunity of getting in, or laying up for thy soul, an opportunity of laying out for God or thy soul, observe diligently all such seasons. Thou mayst do more, or get more in such an hour, than in many days after.

2. Keep thy heart in a disposedness, and constant towardliness to duty : be always prepared to every good work ; see that however sometimes thou mayest want power to perform, yet *to will* may be always present. When a price is put into thine hand, see thou want not

a heart to it; when thine enemy is in thine hand, let not thy heart spare it, let not thine heart be out of the way, when ever the season serves; let not thy heart recur thus upon thee afterward, *Oh what a day have I lost, how much seed might I have sown this day for Eternity, what a treasure might I have laid up for Everlasting?*

3. *Above all take heed you (live) not under a neglect of duty.* The most diligent and vigilant Christians have too many neglects, but see that you are not guilty of any neglect in ordinary, that there be not any thing that you know to be your duty, which you commonly, and of course pass over, so that this day is even as yesterday, and to morrow, and next day, and next week, and so on, is like to be as this day. Whatever it be that you perform, such a neglect as this will unavoidably hinder the thriving of your souls in the grace of God. For,

1. The guilt of such a neglect, will wither and mar the beauty of what is done, and the Lord will have such a standing controversy with you for what is not done, that he will not accept or prosper *what is done.*

2. There will be the want of the influence of those duties that are neglected. We cannot want a duty, but we may afterwards find the want of it in the state of our souls. Grace out of exercise grows to decay, and if *one of thy spiritual members suffer or wast, the whole body suffers with it.*

3. The Devil will fill up the vacancies of our lives. There is not a void place in thy garden,

but the Devil will be sowing his seed ; If you do , the Devil will not leave an empty day, nor an empty hour of your lives : If grace do not fill up each day with the duties of it, he will fill it up with sin : 'Tis an hundred to one , but a ~~weed~~ grows up in the room , where a flower is wanting.

Brethren , if you would be thriving Christians, be universal Christians, for any work your Master hath to do ; be ingenuous Christians, willing to know your whole duty; be watchful Christians, that you may know your duty seasons, and then be faithful, allow not your selves in, be not patient with your selves under, any neglect.

3. *Take heed of the world.* If you be Christians, Christ hath gotten the better of the world, hath gotten the preheminence in you , and brought the world under. If it be so, take heed it get not head again, and that you may be both secured from the snares of the world. and make your best advantages, as Christians of it, Take these following Directions.

1. *Never make an exchange of Christ , or any thing of Christ , for the world , or any thing that is of the world ;* never buy or purchase any thing of the world, at so dear a rate, as the loss of any thing of Christ. Lose not any degree of grace, for the gaining this worlds goods ; lose not a spiritual duty, for the attending on a worldly business. Enrich not your bodies, upon the impoverishment of your Souls.

What possession or use of this world, you may have without your spiritual prejudice , enjoy it and

and be thankful; but beware you do not so take up with the businesses, and take in the advantages of this earth, that your souls suffer losse; that you should ever have occasion to say of any thing you have done or gotten, *This is the price of my peace*, this is the price of my comfort, this is the price of a Sabbath, or a Sacrament, or a Prayer; I have lost a Sabbath, I have lost my communion with God in prayer; I have abated the life, and the vigour, and exercise of my grace; and this is all I have for it, some addition to my outward state: I have more of earth, but so much the lesse of Heaven, more gold, but the lesse grace, more of this Mammon, but so much the lesse Manna, more of the cistern, but so much the lesse of the Fountain. Beloved, it was never the intent of the Gospel to strip you of this worlds goods, but to secure you only from the mischief of it: be but so watchful, and so fearful, and so wise, and wary, in the managing your worldly busynesses, in the improving or securing your worldly estates, that you be not hereby losers upon a spiritual account, that you may have what you have as an addition, but not in commutation for Christ, and he will never begrudge it you, or blame you for it.

2. *Let not Christ and the world again change places, or interests.* If Christ hath your hearts, let him not again be thrown under your feet: if the world be gotten under foot, let it not again get up into the throne, Let it be your servant if you will, but let it never again be your God. Let Christ be the chief in you, let him have the highest esteem, the dearest, the strength of your affections,

affections, the great command of you : Let the word of Christ be of more power with you and carry you farther then all the gains and glory of the world. Let not this be your rule, *To follow Christ and holiness so far as you may, without any prejudice to your worldly interest* ; but let this be it, *Follow the world so far only as you may, without being false or unfaithful to Christ*. Venture on in holiness to the greatest hazard of your estate, but venture not after this, with the least hazard of your Religion. Resolve to be Christians, whether you be rich or poor, but endeavour not to be rich, but upon such terms that you may be never the lesse Christians. Especially take heed that the *Prosperity of the world* steal not away your hearts : *Psal. 62. 10. If riches (increase) set not your hearts upon them.* 'Tis hard to prosper in the world, and not to prostitute our hearts to it. Temptations of prosperity are the worlds courting, and complementing, and wooing of our love : If ever a suitor be like to prevail, it is when he puts on his best array, and trims up himself in his richest and most enticing habit. Prosperity is the *world in its glory*; when ever it presents it self thus to you, then take heed lest you forgoe God, and prove adulterers and adulteresses from Christ.

3. *Let not the Lord want any thing that you have.* There is nothing that you have, but it may one time or other be said to you, *The Lord hath need of it*; and if he hath, let it go : if the Lord say, *I have need of it*, do not you say, *I cannot spare it*: Desire to have only for use, and wat you have be willing to use it, and use it well. Nothing

thing is well used but what is used for God,
That which is bestowed on your selves, or your
children, is misused if it be not bestowed there
for the Lord: entitle God to all you have, write
his Name upon it, and mark it up for him.
*This is his Wool, and his Flax, and his Corn, and his
Silver, and his Gold, and use it for him.*

If your lusts, your pride, or your gluttonie,
or your envie, or your sports, or your pleasures,
or your companions, demand any thing to be
spent on them, or given to them, let your an-
swer be, *It is not mine to give; or what Nabals
was to David, when he sent to him for provisi-
on for himself and his followers. 1 Sam. 25.10.*
*What is David, or who is the Son of Jesse? Shall
I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that
I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men
whom I know not whence they be? What are these
lusts? what is this pride? what are these plea-
sures? shall I take these good things which the
Lord hath given me, and bestow them upon
such vile things as these? were these things
given me to feed mine enemies, and the ene-
mies of God? to feed Snakes and Adders,
Vipers and Scorpions? was this the end why
God hath made me greater then others, that I
might be more wicked then others? Hath God
made me rich, that I might be a drunkard, or
an adulterer, that I might maintain my pride,
and my pomp, and my brutish pleasures? Hath
God made me a rich man, that I might make
my self a best?*

Beloved, the Lord hath rather lent you then
fully given you what you have; you are but
stewards

stewards of his manifold gifts he hath put into your hands, you must give an account to God, for all your receipts and disbursements, and your account will be but a lame account, if you bring in any thing laid out that is not laid out for God: Let not the cause of God, or Religion want any thing you have: let not the poor Saints, or any of the poor afflicted ones of the Lord, go without their parts: let it not be said of any of you, *As good they had been beggars, as rich men, for any good they have done.* He that hath gotten such power over all he hath of this world, that he can freely dispose of it to its proper use, may be numbered among those that have overcome the world, and so is in the less danger of finding it a temptation and a snare to him.

4. *Be you able to want what you have not.* To be able to want the world is a greater honour and comfort then to possess & enjoy it. I know not which is more difficult, to be able to use it well, or to be able to want it; but ordinarily he that can do one can do both; he that can carrie himself as a Christian in his plentie, will be able also to carrie himself so in his penurie: The Apostle tells us, that he had learned how to do both, *Phil. 4.12.* *I know how to be abased, and how to abound: in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* Worldlie men can do neither, they know not how to be rich, nor how to be poor: how to be in credit, nor how to be in disgrace; they can neither bear wealth nor want, that is, they know not how to be as they should be in either

either state. If they are rich and in credit, then they are proud, and wanton, and riotous, and luxurious; if they are poor and in disgrace, then they murmur, then they are impatient, and discontented, and envious at those whose waies do prosper: if they are full they forget God, if they are empty, then they fret themselves against the Lord. To be able to want, and to abound, is the same, as to be able to be a Christian, and to carrie himself as becomes a Christian in both estates: to be able to hold on in a Christian course, without being hindered or turned aside by the one or the other: to be able to be holy with the world or without it: On the one side, to be able to be high, and yet humble, honourable, and yet honest, rich in this worlds goods, and yet rich in good works, to bear his burthen of thick clay without either sinking his spirit, or slackening his pace heavenwards; and on the other side, to be able to be poor and patient, afflicted and chearful, comfortable, contented, and as constantly serving the Lord in the want of all things, as others do in the fulnesse of all things. To be able to live by faith, though he hath never so much else to live upon, and to be able to live by faith when he hath nothing else.

Christians, if you can want, you shall never want. He hath enough, that is able to spare that which he hath not. If you can want the world, the Devil will then want a temptation, either to entice you from, or discourage you in your holy course; you may then be Christians in spite of all the world.

5. Above all, take heed you be indeed gotten clear of the world, from under its dominion. Men may go far in Religion, and yet may perish by the world at last; its dreadful to consider, how many sad instances there are to be found among professors of Christianitie, who have seem'd to have much love to Christ, and think they love him sincerely, whose hearts are yet secretly chained to the world. There is many a professor, that hath made a fair shew, and given great hopes, and hath gotten up both in his own and others Opinion, even to the highest rank of Saints, and is perswaded in his conscience; that he is upright with God, and yet his heart doth secretly cleave more strongly to the world then to Christ, and so may perish everlastinglie. As there may be secret pride that men may be guilty of and not know it; as there is secret hypocrise, reigning hypocrise, that men may be guilty of, so there is a secret reigning covetousness that men may live, and die, and be damned in, when they never suspected it; and this I fear is a more common case then is supposed: When we see men owning the Gospel, setting up the exercises of Religion in their Families and Closses, praying like Saints, speaking like Angels, melted into tears, raised in joye, separated from the world, holding communion, and in many things holding pace with the best of Saints: When we see such persons (and are there not such to be seen?) so excessively greedy, and so industriously driving on after the world, so constantly busie in laying house to house, and field to field; so possessed with worldlie

worldlie cares, so extremely pinching and penurious, so hard-hearted, and strait-handed towards those that are in need, hiding themselves many times from their own flesh, whose worldliness is apparently too hard for their religion, whose religious duties must in ordinary give place to their worldly businesse, but their affection to Christ does make no abasement upon their earthly appetite and worldly cares, but is ordinarily abated by it; who can say to *duty*, *Stand aside*, to *prayer*, *Stand aside*, to *bearing or meditation*, *give place*, when ever they haye a worldly businesse before them; but seldom or never can say, *Stand aside world, stand aside Oxen, and Sheep, and Trades, and Livings, I have a God, and a Soul to be looked after*; but can content themselves for that, with those few leisure times they have, wherin they have nothing else to do; and yet notwithstanding, because there is something of Religion kept going, and at times, some strong workings of their affections that way, thereupon do comfort their hearts, and conclude all is well; nay, let them be never so plainly dealt withall, and warn'd to beware and look to themselves, lest they be found *lovers of this world and strangers from Christ*, yet they cannot see it, they cannot be perswaded, but their hearts are sincere: What can be thought of such persons, but that they are like to die for ever, by their secret adultery against God, which they will hardly be perswaded to suspect themselves guilty of: Look to it that this be not your case, be sure you be gotten clear off the world, and that Christ hath the preheminence

in you. The Devil will allow you to have some respect for Christ, some affection to Religion; will allow you profession, allow you duties, allow you good companie; let them pray, let them hear, let them associate with the Saints, so long as the world governs their hearts they are sure enough. Some indeed he holds *in arcta custodia*, close prisoners, that do wholly mind earthly things; though he could with his captives were all in such a case, without the least sence or shew of Religion; yet those that he cannot keep under so great a restraint, he is content to hold *in libera custodia*, as prisoners at large, any libertie to pray, to hear, &c. that they may take and yet be prisoners, he allows to them: if you be not close prisoners, if the Devil does suffer you now and then to walk abroad and exercise your selves in the duties, and refresh your selves with the delights, and feed your selves with the hopes of Religion: if you be not close prisoners, yet are you not prisoners still? Oh let it not content you that you are prisoners at large: Oh let nothing content you but *your enlargement out of prison*, so that you are no longer prisoners to the world, but Christ's free-men.

4. Be bumble, keep your hearts low; be low *in your own eyes*; think not of your selves above what is meet; be content to be low *in the eyes of others*: That is the harder lesson of the two; there is many a person that is so conscious of his own povertie and worthlesnesse, that if he would he cannot have high thoughts of himself, but yet he would, as *Saul*, be honoured before the people. Take heed of an inordinate affection

tion of esteem with others. Whilst you pretend only to seek a *good Name*, take heed of affecting a *great Name*. Account your selves with *Paul*, and be content if others account you so to, *the least of Saints*. Whilst others are ambitious, with *Simon*, to be accounted *Some-body*, be you willing to be accounted *No-body*; let who will affect to be reckoned amongst the *Worlds great Ones*, let it be enough for you to be accounted amongst *Gods little ones*. If the Lord hath lifted you up, take heed of lifting up your selves; your *wo k* is to abase your selves, and then let God alone to exalt you.

Pride is a *pernicious enemy*, and 'tis one of the last *Enemies* a Christian hath to conquer; a *pernicious Enemy* it is, it casts us out of the heart of God and men; God resists, and men despise the proud. A proud man, whilst he is his own *Id. I.*, is others scorn; it deprives of comfort, it spoils duty, it keeps us barren: A proud man is like the high mountains, there's little good that grows there, the lower ground is ever the more fruitful: He is like *Ephraim*, an *empty Vine*, empty to God-wards, all his fruit is brought forth to himself.

An humble Christian hath this advantage in his duties, he hath none to pleasure but God; let God accept me, and let others think of me what they will. A proud person hath his lust to please, the *eyes* and *ears* of others to gratifie; God and his Soul can have but little of him, that hath so many to mind; pride blasts all that little good its mingled with; 'tis as the *flie* in the *pot*, that mars all the *oyntment*: Christian, if thou

hadst nothing else to keep thee humble, thy pride might do it, and would, if thou duly laidst it to heart.

Pride is one of the last Enemies, and longest liv'd that a Christian hath to deal withal ; it will rise up out of the ashes, and ruines of other lusts ; 'tis not seldom that men are proud, that they are not covetous, or prodigal, or intemperate; nay, it sometimes rises up out of its own ashes : Men may be proud of their humility, proud, that they are not so proud as they have been : And can you be too watchful against such an Enemy ?

Be humble Christians, be humble if you will be holy, Humility is of the Essence of the New-Creature ; he is not a Christian, that is not humble.

And yet, Oh how much of this Pride have too many of us to charge upon our selves ? When our eye is so much at Self, and so little at God, in all we do ; when we are so tender, and so touchy at any thing that reflects upon our selves, and so little affected with the dishonour of God, when our very abasing our selves, is in order to the exalting of our selves : In our very Confessions of the pride of our hearts, do we not sometimes hope, that the sense which we discover of this evil, will more advance, then the evil it self will impair our reputation ? When, what ever evils we acknowledge by our selves, we are in hope they will not be believed : When we cannot bear it, to be reproved, or to hear from the mouth of another, what our own mouths do testify against us : When we loye to speak in our own praise, or if we have more wit, then to be vainly boasting of our selves, yet we

loye

love to hear our our selves commended by others: When we are envious at those that out-shine us, and so stand in the way of our reputation: When we are so impatient of being contradicted, that those that are not of our mind, are not for our company: Do not our habits, our looks, our company, our behaviour, our distances which we keep from those below us, sadly discover what there is in our hearts? Oh Brethren, how is it that our hearts tremble no more, to behold this monstrous devilish sin appearing in us? How can we take pleasure? how can we take comfort in the best of all our parts, or duties, or enjoyments, which are so stain'd with this pride? which is even as great an Ornament to any true worth that is in us, or in any thing we do, as a blister, or a carbuncle, to a beautiful face: How is it that we do not often question whether such a measure of pride, as we find in our selves, can stand with true grace? How is it that we are no more ashamed to draw nigh unto God, when our hearts tell us, how false we have been to him in all our services? What an *Image of jealousy* have we set up, another God, besides the Lord, which must at least divide with him, in all the fruits that are growing up, out of any thing we have received from him.

Christian, Labour to know thy self more thoroughly; and amongst all the lusts of thy heart, which might, if understood, bring thee low, take particular notice of this thy self-exalting Spirit, and if this do not abase thee, and shame thee, and lay thine honour in the dust, thou art proud indeed.

3. Be Temperate. In the use of creatures, I mean, beware of excess: Eat and drink for service, not barely for pleasure. Let not your Lord be a loser by his bounty to you, lose not a duty in a dinner; a full meal makes many a drowsie and short duty. If you be given to *appetite*, take heed, give not to your *appetite* all it craves; let not *appetite*, but conscience be your measure. Eat not your Souls into leanesse, let not your Table become your snare, and that which is given you for your health, become your disease. When you are at your meat, remember your work, and let that limit you; be only so free in your food, as may make you more fit for service: He that hath such a race to run, such a warfare before him, must be temperate in all things, or he may lose the goal and the battel. Not only Drunkards and Gluttons, but even Christians that are accounted sober, are more peccant this way, then they are ordinarily sensible of. The Spirits would be more free, their services would be more lively, their work would be more easie, and their way more pleasant, if they were but more temperate. Christians, let this Scripture meet you at your Tables as well as elsewhere, *Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God.*

6. Be Moderate. Phil. 4.5. Let your moderation be knownen unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Maintain such a tranquility and serenity of mind, let all be quiet, and in such a due and equal composure within you, that it may appear in your carriage without. Let there be no noises nor tumults, but as much as possible, let there be a constant

stant silence and calm upon your Spirits. Moderate your cares, moderate your fears, moderate your passions ; Say to your Spirits when they begin to swell, as Christ to the wind and waters, *Peace, be still* : Get the command of all within you, and keep them under constant Discipline ; be careful for nothing, fear nothing, be impatient at nothing, that whatsoever happens to you without, you may be able to say with the Apostle, *None of these things move me*. Be not like those weakly bodies, whose temper changes with the weather. Be able to bear whatever changes happen from abroad, without any perturbations or perplexing commotions at home, *In your patience possess ye your souls*. Christians, if you can but keep your temper, whatever happens, you may keep your way, and hold on your course whatever happens : An heart out of quiet, will put your whole Man out of course. If you can but be quiet and patient, you may be any thing, you may do any thing that God will have you be or do ; Let your fears, and your passions, and your impatiencies loose, and whither will they carry you ? When you should be denying your selves, you will then be shifting for your selves ; when you should be following Christ, you will then be running from Christ ; when you should be working out your Salvation, all your care will be taken up how to save your selves in a whole skin. Let these be well laid, and you will have nothing to do, but to follow your work, and to run your race which God hath set before you.

V. *Carry your selves well towards others.* A Christian's work doth not lie all about himself ;

A a 3 Though

Though your own Souls be concern'd in all you have to do, yet your care must not be confin'd to your selves alone, you must have a due respect, and a due carriage towards others also.

Carry your selves well :

1. *Towards all men* : Let your Conversations be, as in all things, so towards all men, *as it becometh the Gospel*. I must contract, and here give you some short hints.

1. *Be True.*
2. *Be Just.*
3. *Be Merciful.*
4. *Be Peaceable.*
5. *Be Courteous.*

1. *Be true* : Take heed of the way of Lying : Let sinners know that *a lye is of their Father*, and not of yours. Let the *Word of a Christian be Sacred*. Make sinners say of Saints the same which God says of them, *They are children which will not lye* : let their experience force them to acknowledge, *This spot is not the spot of Gods Children*. Be true. A Lye is ;

1. Contrary to God, who is a God of Truth, and cannot lye.

2. Conform to the Devil, the Father of Lies.

3. Destructive to Society ; there can be no trust, where there is no truth ; and no commerce with those that cannot be trusted.

Temptations to Lying are many, and men are especially tempted to it, in these Two Cases.

1. In case of any faults committed. What can't be excus'd, must be conceal'd ; and for want of a better covering, they must hide it under a lye,

2. In

2. In their dealings in the world. In their buying, and selling, and trading, *The trade of lying gets into every Trade*, as if there were no living but by lying. The seller must have his lies ; there must be a lie to set off the Wares, *Its special good, the best of its kind, when may be 'tis stark naught* : A lie to set up the price, *It stood me in so much, I cannot abate* : A lie to bring on the buyer, *I will not abate*, when it may be the next word is a lower price. The buyer must have his lies ; a lie to bring down the price, *Its naught, its naught, saith the buyer* : A lie to bring down the seller, *I will not give your price, and yet gives it*. Oh, how common an evil is this, and how little considered ! How few are there that have great dealings in the world, that can altogether quit themselves of it ? How many are there that live upon lies, that feed themselves with lies, that clothe themselves with lies, the unlawful gains that their trade of lying hath brought them in.

Christians, especially you that are most ordinarily under such temptations, be sensible of this evil, and avoid it : be resolved and watchful : Resolve to be true ; be true though it be to your loss, be losers rather then liars ; Sell not conscience with your commodities, for a peny or two-pence profit extraordinary. Resolve to be true, and be watchful. Consider what you say before you speak, that you be guilty of falsehood, neither *purposely, nor awarly*.

2. Be just. Observe that Rule of Righteousness, *Do to others as you would they should do to you* ; And let this Rule be observed in all your words, yea, and your thoughts also, as well as

actions ; If you would not be wronged, do not wrong ; if you would not be oppressed, do not oppress ; if you would not be defrauded, do not defraud ; and so, if you would not be defamed, or reviled, do not defame, or revile ; if you would not upon every report, or groundless surmise, be evil thought of, do not think evil of others. You that profess Christianity, are you altogether faultless upon this account ? Would you that all that should come upon you, which by you hath fallen upon others ? Would you that all the world should be to you, what you have been to any in the world ? If you have not been knowingly *unjust in your dealings*, yet have you neither been *injurious in your words* ? Would you that your faults and infirmities should be the ordinary discourse, and table-talk, and merriment of others, and have not yet others infirmities, or faults, been yours ? Would you not be causlessly suspected, condemned, or despised in the thoughts of others, and have you never dealt thus by others ?

Is not this too common, and yet little considered ? When you are together, every evil report that's going, either for want of other discourse, or from a worse cause, must be brought in to fill up the time, and evil reports quickly beget evil thoughts and surmises. *Do as you would be done by* ; if you would not be thus dealt with by others, deal not so with others.

3. Be merciful, Luke 6. 36. *Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful.* You have a merciful Father, you have a merciful High-Priest ; be ye also merciful : As you have received mercy, as you look for mercy, be careful to shew mercy. Give

to him that asketh, lend to him that would borrow, visit, relieve, refresh the bowels of him that is in misery. Be cheerful in shewing mercy, let your hearts give as well as your hands. Be liberal, be bountiful: He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; he that is mercilesse to the bodies of men is therein cruel to their souls. Hardnesse and niggardlinesse in professors of Religion, will disgrace their Profession, and harden the hearts of sinners from entertaining the Gospel: *Can you perswade me that this is the way of God, that this is true Religion? What, a mercilesse Religion, a mercilesse Profession? God keep me from such a Religion.* Your feeding of hungry bellies, your cloathing of naked backs, may be a means to save many a soul from death. The penny, besides that it may gain thee many pounds, a plentiful reward, it may gain many a soul to thy Lord.

4. *Be peaceable, Mark 4. 50. Have peace one with another. Heb. 12. 14. Follow peace with all men. The Lord is a God of peace, Christians are sons of peace. The wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be intreated. Peaceableness standeth,*

1. In an unwillingnesse to provoke or offend: A peaceable man will not *break the peace*, is not quarrelsom or contentions, will not stir up strife, forbears all provoking carriage, hath no provoking tongue, he hath peace in his heart, and that brings forth peaceable language and carriage.

2. In an unaptnesse to be provoked. A peaceable spirit is a patient spirit.

3. In a readinesse to be reconciled, *Jam. 3. 17. Easie to be intreated*: a peaceable spirit is hardly provoked, easily pacified.

1. In

1. In a forwardnesse to reconcile those that are at variance: A peaceable spirit is a ~~peace-making~~ spirit; such an one is both a *blessed man*, Mat. 5. *Blessed are the peace-makers*, and a *blessing* to those he lives amongst. Our angry quarrelsome spirit may be a plague, and one peaceable and healing spirit may be a blessing to a whole society.

5. Be *Courteous*, Sweet and affable in your carriage towards all, 1 Pet. 3.8. This will much win upon the hearts of those you converse with, and beget their good liking of whatever good they behold in you: This will both mollifie their spirits towards you, and make them more willing to hearken to you: Morosity and sowernesse will fright them out of your company, and harden them against your Counsel. Your candor will be the sugar that will help to convey down any pill of admonition or reproof you give them, which otherwise their stomacks would rise against, and spit out in your faces. Carry your selves so to all, that you may convince them that *you are their friends*, the friends of their souls, whilst you appear the enemies of their sins: that *your counsels are the counsels of a friend*, that *your reproofs are the wounds of a friend*, which are better then *the kisses of an Enemy*.

But still take heed that your courtesie to sinners do not lead you in a compliance with them in their sins; that what you intend as a Net to take their souls become not a Trap to take yours. Whilst you are a friend to their persons, beware you be not drawn aside to have fellowship with them in their wickednesse. It is better to be uncivil then ungodly. Be as courteous as possible,

yet

yet so far only that your courtesy be neither a snare to you, nor an encouragement to them in their sins. Be wise as well as kind.

Christians, do not pass over these Second-table duties (which I have for brevities sake packed up into a narrow room), as the lower things of Religion, wherein you may be excused or dispensed with; which a little praying or confessing will make up, and so you may go on; Truth, and Temperance, and Justice, and Mercy, &c. are to be reckoned among the weightier matters of the Law; there is so much Religion in them, that there can be no Religion without them. Though there may be moralitie where there is no true Religion, yet there can be no Religion where there is not morality, *Micah 6. 11, 12.* *Shall I count them pure, with the wicked ballances, and the bag of deceitful weights? The rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Shall I count these pure? Are these my people? What, holy and not honest? religious and not righteous? What, sincerity without truth? a single heart with a double tongue? What, grace where there is no peace, nor mercy, nor temperance? What, railers, and revilers, and quarrellers, and yet religious? Jam. 1. 26. If any man seems to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this mans Religion is vain.* A dreadful word! There are many professors of Religion in whom an unbridled tongue is found. How many light and vain words, how many false and deceitful words, especially how many bitter and angry words do we ordinarily hear out of such

such mouths ? What biting and devouring, what cutting and provoking, what reproaching and reviling language doth often break forth at the same mouths, whence at other times we hear praying and blessing ? But can such consider this Scripture without a trembling heart ? *This mans Religion is vain.* Vain, notes two thing,

1. *Empty* : Whatever Religion such men seem to have, there is nothing in it.

1. *Ineffectual* : That is vain that falls short of, and doth not reach its end, nor bring about that for which it is. The end of our Religion is salvation. Whatever Religion such men have, it will do them no good, nor stand them in any stead, it will never save their souls ; they may die, and be damned, and lie in hell for ever, notwithstanding all the Religion they have. All the *conclusions* that men make from such Religion, that they are in a state of grace and salvation, are false and deceitful ; that faith, and that hope, and those prayers, which will consist with the reigning evils of the tongue, will never be any good evidence of a good state : That which cannot drive the Devil out of the tongue, will never prove Christ to be in the heart. And all the *expectations* that are hence raised of future blessedness, will undoubtedly deceive them : That Religion which will not tame the tongue, will never save the soul.

I insist the more on this, because however those evils mentioned, injure, unmercifulness, intemperance, &c. may possibly be as common, & some of them as pernicious, and the prevailing of them as certainly concluding men in an evil state as this ; yet these evils of the tongue, being but words,

words, are more apt to be lightly passed over, and notwithstanding all the mischievous consequences of them, to be less regarded.

But can you make a light matter of that which proves you damnable Hypocrites? Hast thou spit out all thy Religion in thy furious fits, and yet wilt thou make nothing of them? By this biting and devouring tongue you do not only consume one another, but you consume every man himself your own peace, your own comfort, your own hopes, your Religion and Salvation. You see by experience, how it devours all the exercises of Religion: What duties are we fit for, whilst our tongues are on fire? Prayer must be laid aside, reading, or conference of God, or of souls, are turned out of doors: God himself cannot be heard, conscience cannot be heard, souls cannot be minded, while these noises and tumults last. And that which doth destroy the exercises of grace, cannot but destroy its evidences, and bring us at least to question it, if not to conclude it a nullity. I confess some evils of the tongue may consist with grace in the heart; but if the Scripture be true, *an unbridled tongue* cannot. Grace cannot hold this unruly member under such constant government, but it will too often break loose; but where it is not brought under government at all, where the heart puts *spurs* to the tongue, but no *bridle*; where persons looking upon all this as a matter of nothing, allow themselves in it, and letting loose the reins to their tongue, do ordinarily surrender them up to their lusts and *passions*, to use at pleasure, and to vent themselves freely by; such men must first disprove the

Scripture, before they can prove the truth of their Religion.

Christian, you that have been sick of this disease of an evil mouth, blesse the Lord if the cure be begun, but rest not till it be perfected. It will still defile where it doth not destroy. It will defile *your names*; your evil words will recoil, he that spits against the wind, his spittle is driven back in his own face. It will defile *your consciences*, your hearts never send forth an evil breath, but there is something of it sticks behinde. It will defile *your shires*, there will be a tincture on your prayers of that foulnesse of your mouth which your evil words have left behind them. It will defile *your profession*; that will hardly be spoken well of, which will bear evil speaking. It will disturb where it doth not devour; it will disturb you in your holy course, if it doth not quite divert you, never look to prosper in holiness, or to be fruitful in good works whilst you break foorth into such evil words; these lean kine and thin ears of envy and contention will eat up all your good fruit. I rather wonder to see any thing green in those gardens, where such *locusts* lodge, then that there is no more. Oh brethren, let us no longer excuse, but judge our selves for this: let our bitterness become bitter to us; let us weep over it, let us watch against it, let us quench those fires within, that there be no more such flames and smoak without: let us be sensible of those inward inflammations, of that unquietnesse and unpeaceableness of our spirits, whence all our outward paroxysms arise, they are our soul stomatics that fur our tongues.

We lay the blame of all upon temptations and provocations, but they are our lusts, our lusts that are in fault, which war in our members. Let us be more sensible of these, let us be humbled, let us be ashamed, that we that professe our selves sons of peace should harbour such sons of contention in our hearts. Let the experiences we have had, of the losse we have sustained, the guilt we have contracted, the wounds that we have given to our brethren, to our own souls, to the Gospel of our Lord already; let these set us a purging out this sower leaven. Let salt be cast into the fountain that the streams may become sweeter, and when the fountain is healed, then let us sweep the channel: Let there neither be war any longer in our hearts, nor a sword in our mouths. *Let us beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks.* Let our swords plough up the hearts, and not break the heads; let them pare off and reprove the sins, and not reproach the faces of our brethren: Let us counsel, and admonish, and comfort one another, and provcke to love and good works; but let there be no more bitterness, or strife, or envying, or quarrellings found among us; let us leave these evil fruits to grow onely on evil trees, where we can expect nothing else. Whilst we cannot look to gather Grapes of Thorns, or Olive berries of Thistles, let not the fruit of the Bramble, or the prickles of the Thistle be found sprouting out of the root of the Olive. Let the Saints still be found what they were of old, *Doves, Lambs, Lillies, among Thorns:* Let there be nothing that hurts or offends in all the Mountain of the Lord. Let the prickling briar, and grieving thorn be

be rather in our *sides* then in our *mouths* : Let blessing, and praising, and praying, and intreating, take up all the room , that there be no place left for wrath and contention.

And whilst we take this care about our *words*, let us take as great a care about our *works*. Let there be no *virulence* in our tongues, nor *violence* in our hands : Let there be no *deceit* in our lips, nor *falsehood* in our *dealings* : Let us speak the *words* of *truth* and *sobernesse*, and let us keep the *way* of *righteousnesse* and *peace*: Let us walk *humbly* with *God*, and let us do *justly*, and *love mercy*, and *live peaceably* with *men* : Let *good words* and *good works* meet together, let *Religion* and *Righteousnesse* kiss each other ; let *peace* spring up out of the *earth* , as *grace* hath looked down from *Heaven*, Let us add to our *faith* *virtue*, and to *virtue* *knowledge* , to *knowledge* *temperance*, to *temperance* *patience*, to *patience* *godlinesse* , to *godlinesse* *brotherly kindnesse* , to *brotherly kindnesse* *charity*. Finally, whatsoever things are *true* , whatsoever things are *honest* , whatsoever things are *just* , whatsoever things are *pure* , whatsoever things are *lovely* , whatsoever things are of *good report* , if there be any *virtue* , if there be any *praise* , think on these things. Brethren, so speak ye, and so walk ; these things do, *live in peace and love*, and the *God* of *peace* shall be with you.

2. In special : *Carry your selves well in* , and *towards your families*. You that are *governours* of *families*, you have *more souls* then *your own* to *look to*. You have, *curam animarum*, the *charge* of *souls* *lying upon you*. You are not only to *look* to *your families in matters civil*, but in *matters of Religion*,

Religion. In the Law, the Master of the Family was by the appointment of God, to circumcise all the Males in his house: In the fourth Commandment, the Master of the Family is charged not only to keep the Sabbath himself, but to see that his whole Family kept it. *Thou shalt do no work there-in*, and not only so, but neither *thy Son, nor thy Daughter, &c.* Parents are required, Ephes. 6. 4. *To bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; to nurse them up for God, to nourish them up in the words of Faith and good. *Doctrine*, to suckle their Souls with the Milk of the Word, as well as their bodies with the Milk of the breasts. Now, where there is a charge of Souls, there must be an account given of Souls. When there is a Child brought forth, or a Servant brought into thy Family, God says to thee, as the man in the Prophets Parable, 1 King. 20.39. *Keep this man*, look to this man, if he be lost, *thy life shall go for his life*. If any in the house perish through thy neglect, thy life shall go for his life, thy Soul shall go for his Soul. This is thy charge, and if thou be not faithful, so shall thy judgement be.

But what must we do for the right ordering and governing our Families? Why,

1. Instruct your Families, teach them the way of the Lord, dwell in your houses as men of knowledge, and make God known to all yours, by reading, and acquainting them with the Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto Salvation, by Catechising them, &c.

2. Endeavour their Conversion to God, by speaking often to them, of the sinfulness and

misery of their natural state, of the nature and necessity of conversion, by enquiring often into the state of their Souls.

3. Bring them into Covenant with God, as you have already done it virtually, in bringing them to be baptized; so when they are grown up, and well instructed in the principles of Christianity, and made sensible of their baptismal Engagement, endeavour to bring them to an express dedicating, and engaging themselves to the Lord, according to those directions that have been formerly given to Christians in general.

4. Teach them to pray, and call upon them often, and see to it that they neglect it not.

5. Pray for them, and pray with them.

6. Dispense your favours and frowns, your corrections and encouragements, not only as they are more or less towardly to you-ward, but as they are more or less tractable, and careful in the matters of God.

7. In your disposal of them, either to callings, or in marriage, have a special regard to the advantage of their souls. I can now but name these particulars, which I have formerly more largely insisted on, and pressed upon you.

8. Be examples of holiness to them, walk in the midst of your house with a perfect heart, do not unteach them by your practice, what they have learned from your instructions; do not teach them to slight your words, by the unsuitableness of your ways to them.

For a conclusion of the whole, observe farther, these four general directions:

I. Be

1. Be Sincere.
2. Be Steady.
3. Be Fruiful.
4. Be Stedfast.

I. In your whole course, and all the particular actions of it, be sincere, sincerity is not a distinct grace, but notes the truth of every grace, and gracious action. There is a sincerity of,

Our State:

Our Actions.

1. There is a sincerity of our state. That notes the uprightness of our hearts in the main, and hath been already described, in the directions I have given, in the duty of self-examination.

2. There is a sincerity of our actions, this is two-fold, either such as respects particular and single actions, or the series of our actions, our whole course, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in all simplicity, and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world; in all simplicity and godly sincerity;* There is a natural sincerity, and a godly sincerity; natural sincerity, imports no more, but simplicity, or plain-heartedness; when there is no guile or deceit in any action; no purpose to deceive, no pretence of what is not intended, no conscience of any evil in what we do, nor any evil intent in it. In this sense, God bears witness to *Abimelech's* integrity, Gen. 20. 6. Testifying concerning his taking *Abrams* wife, that *he did it in the integrity of his heart*, that is, he knew no evil in it: He knew not that she was another mans wife, nor intended any wrong to

her husband in it. Then there is also a godly sincerity ; this supposes the sincerity of our state. He cannot have his conversation in godly sincerity, that is not first a godly man. It includes in it, not only Truth, but Faith, and Love, and Ingenuity to God ; not only a good meaning, but a good will to the work, and to the Lord, for whose sake we do it.

To walk sincerely, tis to walk *both as in the sight of God*, as the witness of our uprightness, to whom we dare to appeal, and in the power of the grace of God, which carries us on to pursue his honour and interest. The opposite to his sincerity, is *fleshy wisdom*, or *carnal policy*, which models our Religion and the exercises thereof, in a consistency with, and a subserviency to our *fleshy interests* : And hypocrisy or dissimulation, to which it is most properly opposed. And there is a twofold hypocrisy in our actions: Either total, that which denominates them hypocritical actions, or partial, when though as to the main the heart be upright and the action acceptable to God, yet there is some little mixture of deceit in it ; which though it be matter of humiliation to the doer, yet doth not wholly hinder the acceptance of what's done. As there is no person, so there is no action so perfectly sincere and upright with God, but there is some obliquities to be found in it.

Brethren, be upright in your way ; be true to the Lord, not putting him off with eye-service, but serving him in singleness of heart ; be ingenuous towards God ; with good will doing service ; whatever good words you speak, whatever good duties

duties you perform, whatever good fruits you bring forth, let *god wil* be at the bottom. Let not fleshly wisdom have any thing to do in the managing and ordering your spiritual ways. You must be *fools* if you will be *honest*. *He that will be wise* (saith the Apostle) *let him be a fool*. So he that will be upright, let him lay down his *fleshy wisdom*. Let him not consult with flesh & blood, nor study to cast himself into such a mode, or limit himself to such a measure of godliness, as will best secure and advance his earthly concernments, but laying aside such considerations, let him follow the Lord *in all things*, whether it be *right* or *wrong*, as to matters *outward* and *carnal*.

Beware of hypocrisy and dissimulation: be not *mockers of God*, Gal. 6.7. *Be not deceived*, God is not mocked, saith the Apostle; that is, either God cannot be mocked, there's no juggling with God, there's no deceiving of God's eye; when you have done all you can to varnish an empty or deceitful work, God cannot be deceived; his eye sees what it is. There's no dissembling with God, whatever there may be with men: Or else God will not be mocked; he will neither be put off with, nor bear mocking services, but as men sow, so shall they reap. Look what their work is, such shall their reward and wages be.

There is a twofold mocking:

1. *A deriding mock.*

2. *A deluding mock.*

There is a *deriding mock*, or a putting of *scorn* upon persons. The enemies of *Jerusalem* mocked at her *Sabbaths*; the *Persecutors* and *Crucifiers* of *Christ* mock'd him, and said, *Hail King of the Jews.*

And there is a *deluding mock*, or a putting a *cheat* upon them, to deceive them. He that promises any thing that he doth not intend, he that doth any thing, or gives any thing which is another thing then it appears to be, is a *mock*er. *Thou hast mocked me these three times*, said *Delilah* to *Sampson*, when he pretended to have told her all that was in his heart, and yet had but lyed to her, *Judg. 16.15*. He that refreshes the needy with good words only: *be filled, be warmed*; or *Promises, I will give, I will relieve you*, this is but *mock Charity*: He that pays his debts, or buyes his commodities with brass Money instead of silver, this is but *mock Justice*; and he that worships God with Tongue-worship, or knee-worship, instead of heart-worship, this is but *mock Religion*.

Oh, how much, such mocking of God, are many Professors of Religion guilty of. There's nothing but words in their Professions, nothing but words in their Prayers, nothing but words in their Confessions and Acknowledgements. Their *Faith* is a *mock Faith*, and their *Repentance* is *mock Repentance*, their *Humility* is *mock Humility*; nay, their very *alms* and *be-nevolences*, wherewith those that received them are refreshed and relieved, are in respect to God a *mock-Charity*, *mock-Alms*. Whatever there is done, there is nothing of the heart in it; there's no good will in all their good work, and where that's wanting, the Lord looks on all as nothing.

Oh, remember and bewail all your *Hypocrisies* and *Dissimulations*; you are apt to think, at

at least would make others think, when you have been Praying, or Fasting, or keeping Sabbaths, or visiting the sick, or relieving the oppressed, that you have been doing some great good services; when yet, it may be, you have been dissembling with the Lord in all, and had need to go pray again, not only, *Lord forgive us our sins*, our pride, or our covetousness, but *Lord forgive us our Prayers*, Lord forgive us our Repentance, our Fasting, our Sabbaths, our *Sabbath-mockeries*, our *Prayer-mockeries*. Consider, brethren, what an high provocation this is: 'Tis no small sin to be mockers of men; but will a man mock God? Mal. 3. 8. *Will a man rob God?* saith the Lord. Though you dare to steal, and purloin one from the other, yet dare you be so highly impious and sacrilegious, as to rob God? *Ye have robbed me*, saith the Lord. You have not only robbed my Prophets, and my Servants, but ye have robbed me. *Will a man rob God?* So, *Will a man mock God?* *Seemeth it to you a small thing that you weary men, that you will weary my God also*, saith the Prophet; Seemeth it a small thing to you to deal falsely with men, but will you deal falsely with God also?

Brother, In all your ways observe the rule, *Do as you would be done by*. If you would not that the Lord should mock you, be you no longer mockers of God. Do not put off the Lord with *mock-duties*, unless you will be content to be put off with *mock-mercies*, *mock-comforts*, with a *mock-pardon*, and a *mock-salvation*.

Beloved, Let us bewail our Hypocrisie; Let us not only bewail and be humbled under any

thing we have offered up to God, wherein we have been hypocritical *in toto*, have done nothing else but plaid the hypocrites; but let us bewail all those lower degrees of hypocrisy, that have been mingled with the best of all our duties: blessed be God, that though we have been *soo hypocritical*, yet we are not *Hypocrites*; blessed be God for any sincerity that he hath seen in us, but woe to us, and shame to us, that there hath been so much hypocrisy mingled with it. Oh, let us fear an hypocritical heart: Oh, let us watch against an hypocritical heart, let us purge out all the remainders of this Pharisaical leaven.

Let there be truth in all we do, and as much as in us lies *nothing but truth*. Let us draw nigh to God with a *true heart*, Heb. 10. Let us be *undefiled or upright in the way of the Lord*, Pia 119.1. Let our *works be found perfect before him*. Let us love in truth, let us speak the truth in love, let all our paths be mercy and truth; Let our hearts be in every word, in every step of our lives, let the heart do all, let the heart pray, let the heart hear, let the heart give, and lend, and forgive; Let *the grace of our hearts* do all; Let Faith pray, and Obedience hear, and Repentance celebrate our Fast; Let Wisdome guide, let Truth speak, let Mercy give, let Love forgive, let Patience bear, and Long-suffering forbear, let Temperance feed us, Humility cloath us, and Integrity preserve us; Let Grace *do all*, and let God have all, let Pride have nothing, and Covetousness nothing, and Envy nothing; let Lust neither bear a part in our doings, nor eat any of the fruit of our doings. Let there be written on all we have, or do, *Holiness to the Lord*.

Let

Let us be more desirous to be holy, then to be accounted so; to be merciful, and just, and humble, and patient, then to be accounted such; to have a good conscience in the sight of God, then to obtain a name among the best of men.

If we be not reckoned amongst the *ablest Christians*, for Gifts, for Parts and endowments, let it content us that we are *Christians*. If we be not the most *skillful Christians*, if our fruits be not the fairest and most beautiful, yet let them be *fruits brought forth unto God*, the right fruit, sound fruit. If what we do be *weakly done*, yet let it be *honestly done*.

Let us be *Nathaniels, Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile*. So plain hearted, and single-hearted in all our ways, that though our Adversaries do, yet neither our God nor our consciences can call us hypocrites. Let us be able to appeal to God as the witness of our integrity. *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*, thou knowest that mine heart is with thee: Let us be able to commit our selves and our ways unto the Lord, as he that shall plead for us against all the *lights and censures of men*: *My God shall plead my cause, my God shall answer for me*.

Brethren sincerity will give us boldness before the Lord: We shall be able to lift up our faces in his presence, and look in his face in peace, and he that can be bold with God may be bold with all the world. He that can look God in the face may look his Accusers in the face, his Despisers and Persecutors in the face: He that can freely appeal to God, can boldly appear before men. *The sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulnesse surprizeth*

Hypocrites: The sense of their guilt and guile sides with every danger that they are in, strengthens every fear that comes upon them, makes their own hearts to fall upon themselves, puts a sting into every crosse, starves them out of all their comforts. To God they dare not look, to Conscience they dare not look, their duties and waies they dare not remember, they are forsaken of all their supports, and left to shake and sink under every trouble that comes upon them. 'Tis innocency that hath boldnesse, dare to be upright and fear nothing. *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God accepteth thy works*:

II. Be steady and even in all your goings. Be not off and on, in and out, Prov. 4.25, 26.27. Prov. 33.17. Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. Alone, in companie, at home, abroad, in thy duties, in thy busynesse, in thy recreations, all the day, and every day, let to morrow be as this day, and next day as to morrow: In this evennesse and equalitie of our lives stands the beautie and comelinesse of them, when all the several parts of them bear their due proportion each to other. Let your waies be *conform to the Canon*, and let them be *uniform*: be like unto God, and then be ever like your selves, be unchangeable. We appear almost so many men as we live daies, or come into companies: We have more of the Moon then of the Sun, little light, but many changes and spots. Let not your conversation be so checker'd, let not Christians be *speckled birds*, let there not be so many blacks among your whites, sometimes some thing

thing of God, sometimes as much of the flesh. What a deformitie is it to a new Garment, to have here and there a companie of old rotten patches: Now a little of God, and then as much of the Devil, now in the Spirit, and then in the Flesh, now serious and favourie, by and by frothie and vain; this hour in a divine rapture, and the next in a fleshly frolick, now a little of godlinesse, and then a patch of sensuallitie. Be Christians, and be ever your selves, do not change your hearts with your companie. Be not of those vain ones, who can cast themselves into any shape, can suit themselves to any times or company. Who can weep with those that weep, and mourn with them that mourn, and pray with them that pray, and can also laugh, and be merry, and jolly with those that are so: Let all your goings be established, be ever in the fear of the Lord.

III. Be fruitful. That ground is counted fruitful which bringeth forth good fruit, and which bringeth forth much fruit. I have already directed you how to bring forth good fruit, now let me presse you to see to it, that your fruits do abound. *1 Cor. 15.58. Always abounding in the work of the Lord. Jam. 3.17. The wisdom which is from above is pure and peaceable, &c.* and full of good fruit. *John 15.18. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit. Ro. 6.19. As you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness: You have been the servants of sin, be ye now the servants of righteousness, and be*

ye as free, and as forward, and as fruitful is the service of righteousness, as ever you have been in the service of sin. You have added sin to sin, unrighteousness to uncleanness, iniquity to iniquity: As sin hath abounded and multiplied its fruits, so let grace also abound, and bring forth its fruits abundantly.

Let your lives be as much filled up with the works of righteousness, mercy and holiness, as they have been with the works of the flesh. Brethren, time was, when a little sin would not suffice you; a little sporting, a little pleasure would not serve your turn; you thought you could never have enough of the world, and the lusts and vanities of it; why prove your selves now to be as heartily now the servants of Christ, as ever you were the servants of sin, by being as fruitfully his as ever you were fruitful to sin. If Christ be a better Master, and a better pay-Master, let him have more & more cheerful services. Bring forth good fruits, and of all sorts. As it is said of the *Tree of life* that stands in the *City of God* above, Rev 22. 2. so let it be said of every *living Tree* that stands in the *Vineyard of God* here below. That they bring forth twelve manner, that is, all manner of fruits, be fruitful in every good work, & bring forth fruit for every season. There are *summer fruits*, and there are *winter fruits* that God expects from you. By *summer fruits* I mean, those that are most proper for the days of your prosperity, as *thankfulness*, *watchfulness*, *fear*, *humility*, *self-denial*, *mercy*, *compassion*, &c. your *winter fruits* are such as God looks for in the days of your afflictions, *fasting*, *repentance*, *mortification*, *humiliation*,

miliation, submission, patience, &c. Brethren, be not only good *summer* servants, but *winter* servants also, and when ever it is winter with you, fall close to your winter work; be much in the exercise of *repentance*, *godly sorrow*, *patience*, &c. Let the persecuting world see, that godlines will not only *live*, but *flourish* too in the hardest *winter*. The truth is, there is no such flourishing time for the *Saints* as the time of trouble: Gods trees do usually bear best in *Winter*. The *winter frosts* do ordinarily bring forth and ripen their fruit before the *summers warmth*. At least the hard *winter* prepares for a fruitful *summer*, Beloved, is it *winter* with any of you? lose not this *fructifying* season, to your work, to your work. Let your work serve you instead of fire to keep you warm. Let not the cold winds and storms chill and freeze your spirits, and so kill your fruits; let a fire be kindled and kept alive within you, the fire of love and holy *zeal*, I mean, let those winds not blow out, but blow up these fires; let them blow out the fire of lust, of passion & contention, but let them blow up the fire of love & *zeal*, and let your inward warmth supply the want of outward comforts & encouragements, for the cherishing and ripening of your fruit. Be either bringing forth fruit, or preparing for fruit; let not the *plough* stand still, let the clods be broken, let the seed be cast in; If it be the day of your tears, sow in tears; it is good sowing in such a rainy day: and such a seed-time will bring forth a comfortable harvest.

IV. Be steadfast and unmoveable, 1 Cor. 15.58. Be not moved; either from the *Hope of the Gospel*,

or

or from the Obedience of the Gospel. Be not A-
postate from Christ, let not the fear of the crosse
make you a weary of the yoak of Christ : Turn
not back from the holy Commandment for any
tribulation that may come upon you. Suffer
not your selues to be persecuted out of your
Religion or Conscience.

Tribulations are temptations, and will try what
there is of God in you, what reality there is ly-
ing under all your professions, whether the word
of Christ hath taken any root in you: And such
troubles will make the greatest triall of you,
which fall upon you for righteousness sake.

There are some troubles that fall promiscu-
ously on all, good and bad, and put no differ-
ence betwixt the one and the other, but as an
overflowing flood, bear down all before them :
As in general famines, pestilences, and wars, in
which it happens alike to the just and unjust, to
him that serveth God, and him that serveth him
not.

There are other troubles that fall only on
the heritage of the Lord, on the best among a
people. When the viles of the earth prosper and
flourish, and those only in whom some good
thing is found, are the suffering people. When
the Sun shines on the barren Mountains and
miry Marishes, and the storms, the thunder
and the hail fall only on the fruitful fields ;
when the corn is smitten, and only the thorns
and briars escape. Such troubles as fall on the
righteous of the earth, and for their righteous-
nesse sake ; when the bread and water of affli-
ction are given to Disciples, and in *the name of*
Disciples

Disciples, these are the most trying troubles. Such troubles as leave men to their choice, either to sin or suffer: When godliness becomes the common road to tribulation, and ungodliness is the only door that is left open, by which we may escape and shift our selves out of danger. Such afflictions as these will make the most narrow search and thorough trial whether we are godly indeed or not.

Brethren, see that your hearts be so established with grace, that you stand your ground, and keep your way in such daies of temptation. And that you may hold out, and hold on, and abide in the day of greatest trials, take this course.

I. Try your selves throughly aforehand, 1 Cor. 11:3. If we would judge our selves we should not be judged: Though I cannot say, if we would try our selves we should not be tryed, yet this I can say, if we would try our selves we should be the more likely to abide the trial of the Lord. Try your selves beforehand: And that

1. What you are in the state of your souls, according to the instructions I have alreadie given you in this matter.

2. What you are in your duties, in your active obedience: He that is not faithful in doing the Will of God, is not like to be found faithful in suffering the Will of God. He that carries himself Christianlie in his present state, need not trouble himself with fears and doubts, how he shall stand in any future state he may be brought into.

The trial that trouble will make upon us is, whether we will be faithful in doing the Will of

of God when he must suffer for it : Now he that negle~~cts~~ts his duty, and cannot hold his heart to an holy conscientious course when he is in no danger, and his Religion is like to cost him nothing, what is like to become of this mans godline~~ss~~le, when it may cost him the losse of all? We read, *Dan. 6.10.* *When a Decree was signed, That whosoever should ask any Petition of God or man, save of the King, should be cast into the Lions Den :* that Daniel *prayed and gave thanks to his God three times a day (as he had done aforetime :).* If Daniel had not used to pray aforetime, when praying would bring him into no danger, he would not doubtlesse have adventured on it in such a time, when he saw evidently that it was like to cost him his life. Brethren consider what your present course and care is : Do you pray now, and fast now, and withdrawing your selves from the lusts and liberties of the world? do you now apply your selves to a sober, seriou~~s~~, self-denying life? Are you now active for God and your souls, and have you been conscientious, and watchful, and fruitful *aforetime*, when there was nothing to molest or discourage you? If you have been carnal, and vain, and remisse in the exercises of Religion, when you might have been as holy as you would, as strict & as zealous as you would, without any fear of suffering for it : If you have wasted away your encouragements, & spent out your Sun-shine in a carelesse unprofitable life, how do you think to be ever useful or serviceable in the dark? If you cannot now bear the pains of a godly life, how do you think you shal bear both the pains & the charges of it? If you could

could follow Christ no closer in the plenty of all things, how do you think to follow him, when it must be in hunger and thirst?

Dost thou talk of suffering for Christ, and suffering for Righteousness, and hope thou shalt never forsake him whatever come upon thee, when thy heart tells thee, how much thou hast slighted Christ, neglected thy duty to Christ, contented thy self with a cold, heartless, luke-warm Profession, without the power of Christianity, and that when thou hast hadst no pretence of damage or danger that was hereby like to come upon thee? You that now can keep at distance from Christ for the *satisfying of a lust*, have reason enough to fear that you will utterly forsake him, if you be put to it, for the *saving of our life*. You that in a *calm* can ordinarily remit of your Religion for the pleasing a lazy heart, will be like enough to renounce your Religion in a storm to quiet a fearful heart. He that can sell his Conscience for a Lust, will hardly be persuaded to buy it with the loss of all that ever he is worth. Thou sayest it may be with Peter, *Though I die with him I will not deny him*: I but dost thou deny thy self for him now, deny thy pleasures, and thy ease, and thy companions now? Hast thou not many a time denied him a Prayer or an Alms, when he hath called for it? Canst thou watch with Christ? Dost thou walk with Christ as thou oughtest? Dost thou live to Christ? Art thou faithful in bringing forth fruit unto Christ, the fruits of holiness and righteousness? If not, how dost thou think to be able to suffer for him? If the way of Christ be too strait for thee, thou will find his burthen to be too heavy; if thou can-

He that
not bear his yoke, thou wilt be little able to bear
his Crofs.

Christians, consider what your ways and your doings are at present, and if you finde the Lord helping you to walk in all good conscience now, you need not doubt of being enabled to witnesse for a good conscience when called to it. If you keep the Word, and do the work of the Lord, you may expect his help for bearing his burthen. If you be faithful in your lives, you are the more like to be faithful to the death, *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee in the hour of temptation*, Rev. 3. 10.

2. *What you are in the ordinary and smaller crosses, that come daily upon you:* There is not that man that lives, that meets not with his crosses, which though they be, many of them, but light and inconsiderable things, below the Spirit of a Christian to take notice of, yet how sadly may we observe at what a loss they are presently by them. Every little wind raiseth a storm; every little cross puts us out of course. What breaches are often made upon our consciences, what interruptions of duties, what abatements of our comforts, to what distance are we put from Christ, and our holy communion with him, and all merely for a thing of nought. We cannot bear an unkindness from a Friend, an injury from an Enemy, the provocation of an evil tongue, a scoff, or a slander, but presently our Spirits are in an uproar, and there are such tumults raised up within us, that for the time we forget that we are Christians; Duties, and Comforts, Christ and Conscience, Souls, and the matters of Eternity, and

And all regard to them are laid aside, and turned out of doors. Faith and Patience, and Meekness, and Moderation, are either made to be silent, or at least cannot be heard for the noise of our passions and disquietes; and all this sometimes for such trivial things, that when we come to our selves we are all quite ashamed of our selves.

Brothren, such fails by these lower temptation, I cannot wonder if they make our hearts shaks at the fore-sight of greater. If every small party which the Adversary sends out against us, doth put us to the rout, how shall we stand when he comes upon us with his full body? If we are overcome of the footmen, how shall we contend with the horsemen? If a rod, or a little finger doth so disturb us, how shall we bear the weight of the toins, or the stinging of Scorpions? If we cannot bear an unkindnesse, or a nod, or a scoff, or a slander, what would become of us, should we be brought to resist unto blood?

Beloved, it is of greater import to Christians then they are aware of, both to observe themselves daily, and their carriages in these lower things, and to insure themselves to patience, and meeknesse of spirit under them. Though it be no great virtue to be patient, where there is no great provocation, yet there may be great benefit by it. If we could shame our selves out of this folly and childishnesse of spirit, whereby we are so apt to be moved with every toy; if we could reason, and pray our selves into such a fixed calm and quietnes of spirit, that we could keep our way, with the neglect of such disturbances, our lives would be both more comfort-

table and honourable at present ; and we should be in the better preparation for any harder things that might come upon us. If we know how to be Christians among bryars and thorns, we shall be the better able to continue such amongst Spears and Arrows.

3. What, you are under the temptation of prosperity. The world is a Christians enemy, it expresseth its enmity in its temptations ; the end of all its temptations is, to draw us off from God. Its temptations are of two sorts, either of prosperity or affliction, and both driving at the same end, though in a different way.

Prosperity allures, intices, and flatters us away from God ; it steals away our hearts from God, as *Absolom* stole the hearts of *Israel* from *David*, by fair speeches, by its fair and smiling face, thereby drawing us into a neglect and forgetfulness of God, to grow cold and remiss in our duty to God, to let fall our love and affection, and to lay aside our care of Religion.

Afflictions fright us from God, dealing by us as *Rabshakeh* by *Israel*, when he sought to get them off from *Hezekiah* by his threatenings and great words, *Isai. 36.* If you will not hearken to me, I will make you drink your own piss, and eat your own dung : Afflictions are apt to weary men out of the ways of God, to starve them out of their Religion, to persecute them out of their Consciences, and to make godlineesse too hot for them.

The stronger and the more dangerous of these two sorts of temptations, are held to be the temptations of prosperity ; the world flatters more from Christ then ever it can fright from him.

Now

Now beloved, if you have stod your ground against the former of these temptations you may with the more confidence encounter the latter; He that hath been holy in prosperity, will be holy in afflictions; he that knoweth how to abound, will the better know how to want; he that hath kept close to God, kept up his affections, kept on his way against all the fawns and flatteries of the world, his spirit is not like to be sunk under his frowns and threatenings: The God that hath preserved you from being lull'd asleep by the warm Sun, will also Preserve you from being withered by the scorching Sun.

II. *Mortifie the flesh with the lusts of it.* The corruption that makes affliction tedious and dangerous. Unmortified lusts will both make affliction to be the sharper, and also to be the greater temptation.

1. They will make afflictions to be the sharper and more painful. A Christian who hath two men in one, the old man and the new, hath two tender parts, which are apt to smart and to be put to pain at every little thing that offends his Conscience and his Lust: That which offends Conscience and makes it smart is sin; that which offends Lust and puts it to pain is affliction. If Conscience be grown dead or benum'd, sin never troubles, and if Lust be once dead afflictions never trouble: Kill your lusts, and you at once kill all your adversaries and afflictions.

What makes contempt and disgrace so tedious? Why, it is the pride of our hearts. What makes poverty and want so grievous, but the covetousness and greediness of our hearts: The

appetite will be quarrelling that it wants its dainties, the wanton man will be vexed that its deprived of its gay cloaths and rich attire, carnal fears, and worldly cares, come in with their vexations, kill these lusts, and you give present ease to your hearts; 'tis sin that makes sufferings smart.

2. They hereupon make afflictions to be the greater temptations: the more afflictions pain us, the more strongly do they persuade us to take heed of that which brings them on us, and to comply with any thing that will give us ease or relief. Every pang and troubel that comes upon us for godliness sake, will be clamoring and crying out against it, *away with it, away with it.* This professing and praying, and precise walking, hath undone me; this Conscience hath broken my back, lost me my Estate, my Liberty, my Friends; bereft me of all my comforts, my credit, my quiet, and created all these fears, and sorrows, and vexations which are upon me. Will remitting my zeal, dispensing with Conscience, calling off care, make me whole, and save me all this harm and loss, why then shall I thus torment my self, when I have such a way open to escape all?

Brethren, would you be secure from such temptations, get your lusts slain, which put an edg upon them: Cut off all provision from the flesh, that would keep it in heart. Allow not your selves liberty to live a sensual life, while you have opportunity; bring your selves under a voluntary restraint; abase your selves, before God hath the abasing of you; deny your selves, before God comes to deny you; put the bridle upon your appetites; before God come and put bonds upon them

them and you; restrain your selves of your delicates before God come and shorten you; uncloath your selves of your wanton habita before God hath the stripping of you; starve your lusts to death, that the Lord come not and torment them. Let tribulations find their hard work done to their hand, and they will be more easie.

Get your hearts so low, that the contempt of men cannot bring you lower; that the pollers cannot make you poorer then your hearts have made you already; give all you have to God, your ease, and your pleasures, and your liberty, and your estates, give away all you have from lust to God, and then you will not be disquieted at whatsoever Messengers he sends to fetch in away.

When this is done, what hurt can tribulation do you, what temptation will it be unto you? You will then dare to follow the Lord against all the world; you will not fear your Religion will prejudice you; you will not fear loss; you have nothing to loose, all is given away already; you will not fear a Prison, your hearts have carried you thither already; you will not fear disgrace or contempt, your hearts have brought you so low that the pride of men cannot lay you lower; you will not fear torments, when your flesh is dead and can feel no pain.

II. Be convinced of the dreadfulness of Apostasy, and the misery of Apostates and back-sliders. Remember Lots wife: God hath left us many Pillars of Salt before our eyes, to warn us to take heed of looking back.

Mat. 7. 27. *The fall of that house was great, that is, it was a dreadful and a terrible fall; it was*

ken of the house built upon the Sand, which when assaulted by the winds and flouds of persecution, fell, because it had no foundation, and great & dreadful was the fall of it, a fall from an house to an heap.

Heb, 13. 38. If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. Let him go take him who will for me; take him World, take him Devil, for I regard him not. Thou mayest go whither thou wilt, that art gone from thy God, thou must look to thy self, and shift for thy self as thou canst, God hath no further favour for thee, his soul is loosed from thee.

Rev. 16. 15. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments; (that keepeth his garments) that is, that keepeth his Faith, his Conscience, his Religion, his holy Profession wherewith he is clothed; that keepeth them clean, ne polluantur, that hath not defiled his garments, that keepeth them safe, ne eripiantur, that hath not lost his Garments; that hath neither defiled his Profession, nor lost his Religion and Conscience. He is a blessed man, Revel. 2. and chap. 3. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, of the hidden Manna; to sit with me on the Throne. To him that overcometh, that is, that holds out to the end. Hold out and you overcome, overcome and you shall reign, overcome and you shall eat of the Tree of Life, and hidden Manna.

Now Brethren, if a blessing be the portion of him that keeps his Garments, keeps his Faith, and keeps his Conscience, what shall be his portion, that hath lost all, and thrown off all?

He that hath lost his ~~holie~~ garments hath woven to himself a ~~clashing~~ ~~of~~ ~~curfes~~ not of blessings: If he only that overcomes shall sit on the Throne, shall eat of the Tree of Life, then what shall he eat, or where must he sit that is overcome? He shall eat the fruit of his own doings, of his lies, and hypocrisy, and dissembling, he shall feed upon death and wrath, death shall feed upon him, and he shall have nothing else to feed upon, there is meat for him to eat, and a place prepared for him, such as it is, his place shall not be on the Throne, but under the Foot-stool.

Now put all this together, and you may see the woful state of Apostate Professors, they are *Monuments of Vengeance*: Though they have lost their savour, yet they will serve for *Pillars of Salt*; a standing dread, and terror, and warning to others, on whose foreheads is written, *Let him that thinks he standeth take heed lest he fall*. They that are cloathed with curses, must feed upon fire, and have their dwelling under the foot-stool in scorn and everlasting contempt.

Apostates are the worst of men, Those that have lost their Religion, have lost by their Religion, 2 Pet. 20 12, Better had it been for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then having known so turn from the holy Commandment. Religion, which is a wing to Saints, whereby they rise up into glory, is become a weight to hypocrites, to sink them so much the deeper in wrath. Apostates are in the worst case of all men,

1. They are the worst in Gods account. The Lord hath a *double quarrel* with them, not only for being found under the Enemies colours, but that ever such

such valets should have marched under his colours : A quarrel with them for their Profession, for their Prayers, wherein they have but abused his Name and Gospel : God and his ways have suffered from none so much as from renegado disciples

2. They are the worst in the account of men, both good men and evil men : there are none that can speak well of Renegado's ; they are the sorrow of Saints, and the spouse of sinners, good mens shame, and evil mens scorn, and the hate of all.

3. But especially they are the worst and most miserable of men, considered in themselves, they have not only lost their Religion, but they have sinned against themselves. All the profession and prayers that they have made, together with all the hopes, and joys, and comforts that once seemed to grow up out of them ; the remembrance of them (I mean, when ever they come to remember themselves) will bear so many darts in their liver, and sting in their hearts : All their hopes, and joys, and comforts have given up the Ghost, and these ghosts do haunt them and torment them with such thoughts as these.

Wretched creature that I am, wherein I ? what an exchange have I made ? Lights for darkness, wisdom for folly, rigbteousnes for wickednes, gain for godlinenes, conscience for credit, Heaven for Hell.

I was once, as I thought, in the way of Life, and I had hopes I should have seen life ; I made profession of Religion, and took pleasure in Religion ; I walked after the Lord, and the thoughts of God were pleasant to me ; I found comfort in Christ, I took sweet counsel with the Saints, and

and went to the house of God with them in company. Sabbaths were a delight, Ordinances were a refreshing to me, I have talked of the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come; and whilst it was thus with me, I had great peace, and was full of hopes that I should once see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

But wo is me, where am I now? How hath my treacherous heart, that I never suspected, turned me aside from God, and spoiled me of all my hopes and comforts? I must now bid adieu to all farewell Profession, farewell Religion, farewell Conscience, farewell Duties, Sabbaths, Ordinances, Saints, the sweet delights I took in them, farewell joyes and hopes for ever. Welcome Drunkards, Swearers, Liars, welcome Turk, or Pope, or Devil, I must now be of your side, and take up my lot with you for ever. Oh whither am I fallen? Study well the mistery of such persons, and let that be a warning to you.

IV. Be circumspect. See that you do not unnecessarily put sufferings upon your selves, especially look to it, that you suffer not as evil doers. If your sin lead you into sufferings, God may leave you in them, and then what is like to become of you?

There is a suffering for our faults, there is a suffering for our righteousness without our faults, and there is a suffering for our righteousness straugh our faults. We sometimes run our selves upon trouble when we need not; as when by our unwary & imprudent managing & ordering our selves in some duties, we lay our selves open to those sufferings, which a little prudence might have prevented. We must be wise as well as innocent. Christians should

should never ordinarily expose themselves to suffering, till God hath so hedg'd up all lawful ways of escape, that they must either suffer or sin.

Be so wary in your course, that you may not *saul*, *tily suffer for the good that is in you*; but especially see to it, *that ye suffer not as evil doers, and for the evil that is found in you*: To this end be careful,

1. That you speak not, nor do any thing in the matters of Religion rashly. 'Twas good counsel which the Town Clerk gave the *Epheſians*, when they were in a tumult and uproar about their goddeſſe Diana, Act. 19. 36. *Seeing that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly*. Christians should be considerate and well advised in what they speak or do, should mark and weigh their words and actions themselves, which they know will be so narrowly observed and weighed by others.

2. That you speak not, nor do, nor refuse to do any thing obstinately, or out of *ſtomack* or animosity. Let your wayes be guided, not by *paſſion* or a spirit of contradiction, but by *conſcience* and *meekneſſe* of spirit; be not self-willed. Let nothing be done through *ſtrife*, &c., *Phil. 2. 3*. Be *ſteadſaſt*, but not *ſtrubborn*; be *ſtaſhful*, but not *wiſful*; be *zealous*, but not *contentious*.

3. That you neither do, nor suffer any thing out of pride or *vain glory*; as the Apostle exhorteth, *Phil. 2. 3*. *Do nothing, so ſuffer nothing, out of ſtrife or vain glory*. Take heed that an affection of popular *applauſe* or gaining the repute of *active Christians*, of bold and resolved Christians, be not it that leads you on. Your pride may cost you much, but will never bear your charge; may bring you into trouble but will never bear you out.

4. That

4. That you do nothing *ignorantly*, or upon mistake. Be *clear*, especially in those things which may be *costly*. Study your duty thoroughly, labour to see your way plain before you ; to see the pillar of fire and of the cloud going before you ; Give heed to the word of the *Scriptures*, which is a *light to your feet*, and a *larchhorn to your steps* : Where you are clear you will be bold ; but take heed of suffering upon a mistake. Your troubles will be like to open your eyes, and shew you mistake, and thereby put out your lights, destroy your supports and comforts.

5. Do not suffer unpeaceably. Suffer not for unpeaceableness, and suffer not unpeaceably ; be patient and you will be peaceable.

Brethren, see that you be thus well advised, meek, humble, peaceable, and clear in the grounds of your sufferings : And then,

V. Be resolute, be sure you stand on good ground, and then resolve to stand your ground against all the world. Follow God, and fear not men. Art thou godly ? Repent not, whatsoever thy Religion cost thee ; let sinners repent, but let not Saints repent : let Saints repent of their *faults*, but not of their *Faith*, of their *iniquities*, but not of their *Righteousness*. The *Psalmist*, as holy a man as he was, was almost brought to it, his feet were almost gone, he began to say, when he considered the prosperity of the wicked, and his own afflictions, *Psal. 73*. *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and wash'd mine hands in innocency.*

Look to your selves you that stand, and take heed lest you fall : You that stand in integrity, take heed lest you fall away by your *repentance*.

Repent

Repent not of your ungodlynesse, least you afterward repente of your repentence. Repent not of your righteousnesse, no, nor of your zeal, or your forwardnesse, or activity in the holy ways of the Lord. Your zeal, it may be, hath put you in the *front of the battle*, where you receive the first and heaviest charge of your enemies reproaches and persecutions, when others that have kept them more close, and been more remiss, or hid in the crowd, & more out of gun-shot, yet with not your selves a step farther back, or a cubit lower in your stature, in the grace of God. Wish not any thing *and more*, concerning which God will say, well done.

Repent not, an *I remit* not of your zeal; think not of a retreat. Do not as the King of *Israel*, hide your selves under a *disguise*; feign not your selves to be worse, in hope to escape the better; the *arrow* may find you, though you be hid from the eye. Let not any of you that have been confessors of Christ, return to be only his *midnight Disciples*.

Forfalte not the Lord till you can find a better Captain, that is, till God cease to be God, till the Lord say, *SMI* for thy self, *there is no help for thee in thy God*. Retreat not from holynesse, till you are sure you can retreat without losse. Be not false to Religion, till you find it false to you. If ever Godlinesse leave you in the lurch, renounce it and spare not. If ever Religion cost you more then it is worth, throw it off as you will.

Christians, know when you are well, and hold your own, be not betrayed out of your refuge. If you must suffer, suffer for that which will pay you your charges; suffer not for your sins, but for your Religion; suffer not for the shadow or name, but for the

the substance of Religion. If anything in the world will save you harmlesse in your sufferings, and quiet the cost of all your expences, it is *substantiall goodness*. If there be any *stigmata* *Lordis*, they are the marks which we bear in our bodies of the Lord Jesus. If there be any shame that hath a glory in it, it is the *reproach of Christ*, and the shame that you suffer for his Name. If there be any *Crosse* that is a *Crown*, it is the *Crosse of Christ*: If there be any *Crosse* that can be undoubtedly called the *Crosse of Christ*, it is the *holy Crosse*, or sufferings for holiness. Those *Martyrs* that suffered under the Popish tyranny, for witnessing against the abomination of the *Masse*, with the rest of their *Idolatries* and *Superstitions*, had not a more clear and glorious *Cause and Crown*: then thou hast, who sufferest for the power of *Holiness*.

If there be anything in the world which God owns, and wherein his honour is nearly concerned, it is *holiness*. If ever the Devil shewed himself a Devil, it is in his opposing *holiness*; if ever he shewed himself a Devil in *print*, it is in those *books* of *reproaches* and *scoffs* that are written against purity; if ever he shewed himself a Devil in *grain*, it is when his hands have been dild with the *blood of Saints*.

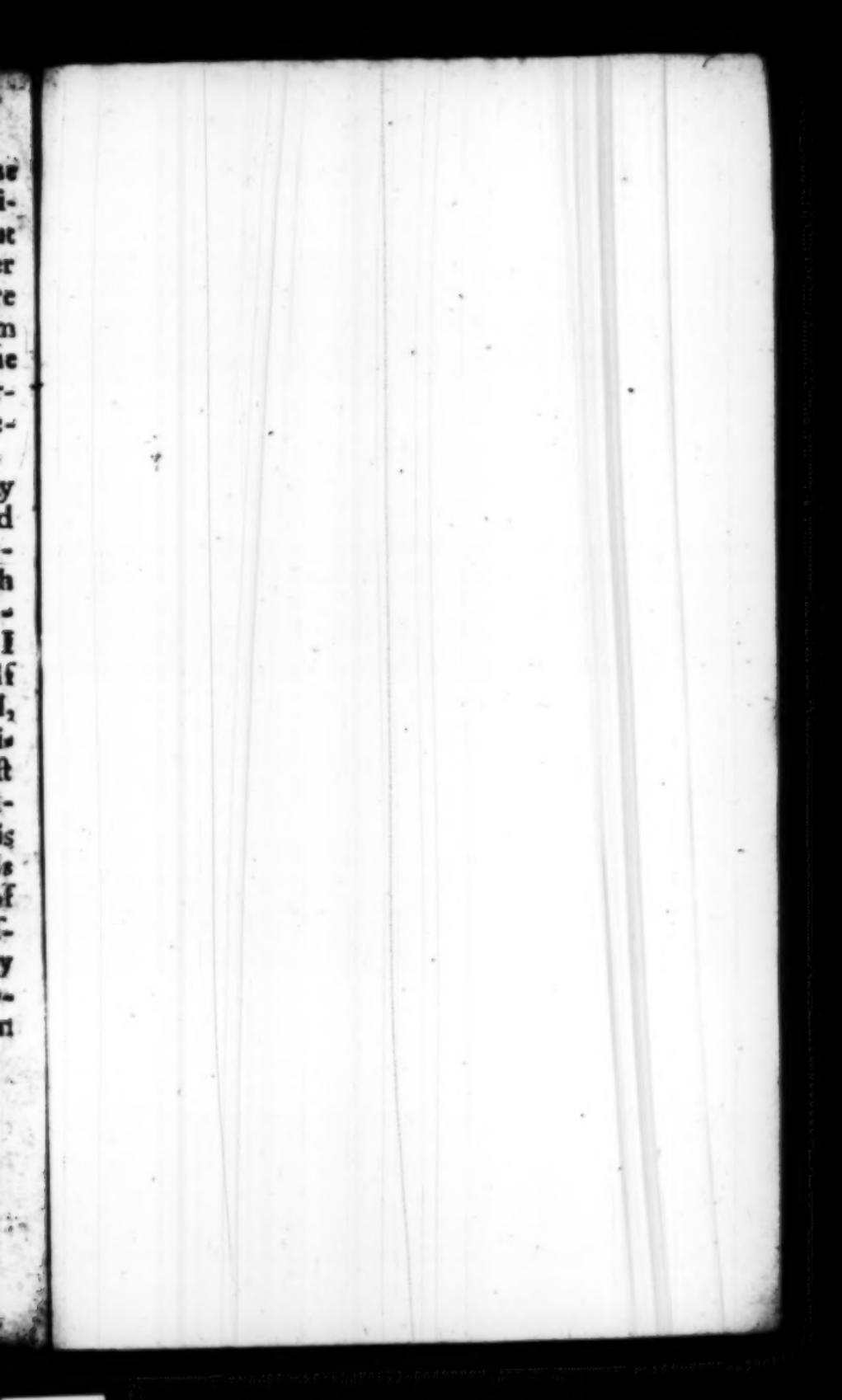
Brethren, if you will resist the Devil, if you will be on the Lords side, be on the side of *holiness*. If you will stand to any thing, if you will not be whistling, inconsistent, shaken reeds, tossed up and down with every wind, if you will fix any where, fix here, upon *substantiall godlineſſe*.

This is the great controversie betwixt Heaven and Hell, betwixt the seed of the Woman and the Serpent,

Serpent, betwixt the professing and profane world, about the substance and power of godli-
ness; some quarrels and contests there are about the shadows and appendants of Religion, matter
merely circumstantial; but whatever noise there
be made about such things as these, the bottom of the controverie lies deeper: it is about the
body of Religion, and not the skirts of its gar-
ments: it is he that will live godly in Christ Je-
sus, that doth and must suffer persecution.

Art thou godly? Fix here, and let this be thy
resolution: I live in a world of quarrels and
contentions, contentions about shadows and cir-
cumstances; but for such things as these, though
I will not desile my self by complying in my pra-
ctise, with what Conscience complies not, yet I
list not to be contentious, nor to perplex my self
or others about them. But by the grace of God,
whilst God is a God of holiness, whilst holis-
tiness is the Image and Interest of God, whilst
these words of the Lord, Be ye holy, follow holii-
ness, live righteously, soberly, and godly in this
present world, whilst these, and the like words
of the Lord, Stand unrepeal'd, by the Grace of
God I will be a Friend, an Advocate, a Consel-
lor, a Practitioner of Holiness to the end of my
days. This is my resolution, and in this reso-
lution I commit my self to God, and so come on
me what will.

F I N I S.



Vindiciae Pietatis :
OR, A
VINDICATION
OF
Godliness,

In the greatest Strictness
and Spirituality of it.

From the Imputations of
FOLLY and FANCY.

Together with
Several Directions for the Attain-
ing and Maintaining of a Godly life.

By *R. A.*

London: Printed in the Year, 1663.

(saith the Apostle) *but all things are not expedient.* A circumspect Christian endeavours both to keep a good Conscience, and to keep a good Name ; he would keep a good Conscience for his own sake, and a good Name, as far as may be, for his Brethrens sake ; his desire is both to *hold up the power of Religion*, and to *keep up the credit of Religion* ; and therefore it is he herein exercises himself, both to keep a *Conscience void of guilt in the sight of God*, and a *Conversation void of offence in the sight of men*. The servants of Christ see that there are many eyes upon them, that will espie the least spot upon them, and therefore their care is, to keep themselves *unspotted of the world*, to carry themselves so, that if it be possible, the world may have nothing to spot them withall ; they are sensible how obnoxious they are to the severe and rigid censures of the world, and that all the reproaches that fall on them, fall on the Lord and his Gospel. What an out-cry is there in the world against those that fear God, as if they were bryars and thorns, the fire-brands of the world, and the troublers of Nations, that turn the world upside down, as if there were no Lyons in the world but Christ's Lambs, as if Christ's sheep were all *Wolves* ? And therefore to prevent this, and put to silence the ignorance and malice of evil men, they endeavour as much as may be to gain upon the hearts, and to get the good opinion of all men, to walk so, that they may not only profit, but please others, and render the Gospel the more lovely with them ; they would not only *wrong no man, defraud no man, provoke no man*, but they would *displease no man*, give no man any occasion of offence or distaste at them and their way. Sinners, as much as the poor Saints are cryed out against for troublesome and unquiet, yet they are desirous rather to please, than provoke you ; they would please all the world as far as they may without hurting themselves or them : Indeed they would not sin against God to please men, they

they would not wound their consciences to save their credits, they would not lye, nor dissemble, nor flatter, nor connive at you, nor comply with yds in sin to gain your good will, but as far as they can, in order to your good, they are willing to become *all things to all men*; let them alone but to do their duty to God, to your and their own Souls, and if that do not displease you, they are willing in all things to do their best that they may not offend you.

And thus have I given you the description of these men by the exactnes of their walking according to the *Scriptures*, which stands in their endeavour to have respect to every command, to the most inward and spiritual part of every Command, and to observe every Command to the *utmost*; to this I shall add two things.

1. When they have done all that they can, after this care and circumspection, they will acknowledge themselves *unprofitable Servants*; they are *thankful*, and bless God for helping them on in his way, but yet they are *humble*; they are so far from boasting that they have done so much, that they are ashamed that they have done no more: Whilst they admire the Grace of God towards them, they abase and *abhorre themselves in dust and ashes*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, (no thanks to me) but to the grace of God that was with me*: Some comfortable difference there hath been (blessed be God) betwixt my Conversation, and the wayes of many others; but, *who hath made me to differ from another? or what have I, that I have not received?* and if I have received it, why should I boast, as if I received it not? Something through the Grace of God hath been done, some service hath been performed; but what's all this to what I might have done? what's all this I have done, to what I have left undone? How small is my service, if it be compared

with my sins? How few are my duties, if compared with my neglects? What's all I have done for God, to what I owe to the Lord, to that which he hath done for me, *who hath redeemed my life from death, and crowned me with loving kindness?* But oh! What's all I have done, to what God hath promised to do for me? What's my *work, to my Reward?* What's my Race, to my Crown? Such humbling self-abasing thoughts as these, do Christians exercise themselves in, to lay them low, even in the dust before the Lord. The profane World brand them for a proud Generation, who say to their Brethren, *Stand aside, I am holier than thou.* What more common in such mouths? precise, but as proud as the Devil. It's true, and Christians will freely acknowledge it, and take the shame of it upon them, that this pestilent Evil, *Pride,* is a weed apt to spring up in the richest Gardens; we can hardly be lifted up to an holy course, but we are apt to be puffed up with a vain conceit; we can hardly do well, but we are apt to think too well of *what we do:* many a precious Christian, hath groaned and travelled in pain, under the bondage of a self-exalting heart; but yet he is bewailing it, and bemoaning himself for it; yet, his very disease helps on to a cure, his pride is a means to humble him, his being lifted up above measure, is the very *burn in his flesh* that brings him low; he abhors himself the more, and abaseth himself the lower, for that he hath exalted himself so high; and the constant desire and labour of his Soul is, to bring himself to, and hold himself in such lowlinesse of heart and life, that whatever he be, or hath done, *the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not him.*

2. What ever they have done, they dare not trust upon it, or be found in it; they dare not be found in their own righteousness, but count all things nothing, so that they may *win Christ and be found in him.* They labour

hour as zealously in the works of righteousness, as they would have done, if this must have been their righteousness, in which they must have stood before the Lord; and yet they depend as singly upon Christ, and his righteousness, as if they had never done any thing.

Before I proceed any further, let us a little consider, what it is of all this which hath been spoken of these men, *wherein their folly lies*; are they fools for making so wise a choice, for choosing the better part; those true riches, that enduring substance, those everlasting treasures, which are laid up in another world; that they will not be cheated, nor be beguiled by the Devil of that better inheritance, by those toyes and fooleries, the pleasures, honours, and other vanities of this present world? that is, *are they fools that they are not brutes?* are they fools, that they have taken the right way to the obtaining and possessing that blessedness which they have chosen, that they do not content themselves with idle wishings and hopings for that Heaven, and promise to themselves, they shall not fail of it, though they never take that course that leads to it? that is, *are they fools, that they be men?* and will hearken to their reasons and understandings, which tell them, that the end cannot be attained without the means? Are they fools that they will be upright, that they will not lye, nor swear, nor curse, nor drink, nor riot, nor defraud, nor oppresse but are willing to walk in all the commands of the Lord blameless? that is, *are they fools, that they are honest men?* Is this their folly, that they will not content themselves with a formal outside Religion, with outward Reformation, but will take care of the heart and inside, as well as the outside; will perform spiritual duties, purge themselves from spiritual wickednesse; will make sure work, by laying the Axe to the Root of that wickedness which breaks forth in their lives, those lusts that war in their members?

bers? that is, are they fools, that they are not hypocrites? Is this their folly, that they are so free, and forward, and zealous in that which is good? that is, are they fools, that they will love God so much, and fear God so much, and go on so far, and so fast in obedience to him; that they do not give up the strength of their hearts, the vigour of their affections, and care, and labour, to the Devil and their lusts, and reserve only some little for God and their Souls? Are they fools, that they will be so wary and watchful against sin, and temptations to it, that they will keep themselves so far out of danger as may be? that is, *Is it their folly that they are not fools?* Stand forth ye wise men of the world, that charge the Saints with folly; read over all the particulars of that true description I have given you of them, and tell us in good earnest, if you can, in which of the particulars their folly lies; is it that they are not brutes, that they are men, that they are honest men, that they are not hypocrites, or that they are not fools, that you account them such? Men are fools that they are so precise; 'tis all o're, as if you should say, if they were wise they would be brutes, knaves, and fools: Behold here the wisdom of this world; Hath not God made the *wisdom of the world foolishness?*

Thus we have seen what this exact and upright walking is, as it respects the commandments; Now shall we consider it,

2. As it respects Conscience? And thus I shall give this double description of these circumspect Christians.

1. They take great care of Conscience.
2. They give good heed to Conscience.

1. They take great care of Conscience, and take great pains about their Conscience. Their care they take is two-fold:

1. About the informing and instructing Conscience.
2. About the keeping Conscience tender.

2. They

1. They take great care about informing and instructing their Consciences ; Conscience is to be made the inward guide of their way. As the Word is to be their guide without them, so Conscience is to be their *inward guide*. Their care therefore is, that it may not be a *blind guide*. Hence it is, that they are so much in searching and studying the Scriptures ; they are much conversant in their Bibles, they are observed to be frequent in hearing Sermons, diligent in noting and repeating what they hear ; are often putting their doubts, and opening their difficult cases, to those that are able to resolve them, and all this to get their Consciences enlightened and instructed in the will of God : Though there are many things that they are ignorant of, yet there is nothing they are willingly ignorant of, their desires and prayers to the Lord, are the same with the Psalmists, *Psal. 119.19. Hide not thy Commandments from me* : and with Elihu's in *Job*, *What I know not, teach thou me*.

2. They take great care to keep their Consciences tender : Tenderness of Conscience, is sometimes taken for weaknesse of Conscience ; a weak Conscience, is that which is both weak-sighted, and is not able to discern between things that differ, but is very subject to mistakes, it mistakes good for evil, lawful for unlawful, and it's also full of troublesom and unreasonable fears, and endlesse scruples, which, as the crudities abounding in a weak stomach, do make it keck and rise, not only at that which is hurtful, but sometimes at that which is wholsom enough ; it often fears where no fear is ; this tenderness their endeavours are to eure, and not to cherish. True tenderness of Conscience is the perfection of it ; a truly tender conscience is a sound conscience, which is quick of sense, and presently feels, and smarts, and is put to pain with any thing that is really an offence to it. A tender conscience is as the eye, the least dust that's blown into it, will make it

it smart; and this not from forenesse, but quicknesse of sense. The dim-sighted world look upon all tendernessee as weaknesse, and count all such, whose consciences cannot down with any thing, as a company of sickly, weakly, brain-sick spirits; and all their doubtings and dissatisfactions, to be humor and conceit, and peevishnesse, and causlesse fears; but this tendernessee is so far from being the sickness, that it is the *health* and soundnesse of the heart; it was the commendation, and not the reproach of King *Josiah*, 2 King. 22.19. *That his heart was tender.* These tender circumspect Christians are very chary of keeping their hearts in; and therefore any thing that would brawn or harden them, they carefully shun; as the eye that cannot endure the dust that falls into it, is quick at its ward, to keep off any thing that would be noxious to it; and this is the reason why Christians can bear any thing rather than sin, because it's this alone that's hurtful to conscience; they are hardy enough to bear afflictions, these are no prejudice to conscience; it is not against their consciences to suffer, but it is to sin; affliction may perplex the thoughts, and too much disquiet and distemper the passions, but will never trouble conscience.

Object. *Tender Consciences!* who more stubborn, and peremptory, and obstinate, and stiffe in their way, than these? Do you call this *Tenderness*?

Sol. There is a threefold stiffeesse: Manifested,

1. In a refusing to receive Conviction, touching any thing wherein they are faulty, or in an Error.
2. In a refusing to revoke their Errors upon conviction that they are in a fault; let either of these be charged upon them, and let the charge be made good, and then call them stubborn, obstinate, or what you will.
3. In a refusing to act contrary to their conviction, to do that which conscience is not satisfied in; which, after their most free and fair debate, most candid enquiring in-

to,

to, and most impartial weighing all that is or can be said for it, their conscience still tells them, they should sin in doing it: Hereupon, though all their friends should come and perswade, and entice them; though all their Adversaries should fall a scoffing and reproaching them, a threatening and persecuting them, yet still they refuse to yield. This stiffness is that stedfastnesse which the Lord requires in them, and is so far from being inconsistent with true tendernesse, that it is their tendernesse.

If an Idolater should come and perswade such to worship an Idol, if he should threaten them with the Fiery Furnace, with the Lyons Den, and yet they will not; Is this their stubbornnesse? Or, is it not their tendernesse? If an Adulterer should perswade them to Uncleanness; if a Libertine should come and think to scoff them out of their strict and holy course, or to tempt them but to some little indulgence to their flesh, in some such way as this; why, what hurt is there in a little mirth? what great matter is it, to take a little liberty now and then? why should you think your selves wiser than other men? and yet they will not hearken: Will you call this their obstinacy, or their tendernesse? Here be obstinate creatures indeed, they will not be Idolaters, they will not be Unclean, they will not be Libertines, they will not be Lyars, nor Dissemblers, they will by no means be perswaded to rebel against God and Conscience, and therefore they be obstinate. Perswade them to that which is good, convince them that they are in an Error, and then try whether they will be obstinate: tell them, *Friends, you walk disorderly, unchristianly; you are uncharitable, censorious, contentious, proud, vain, and convince them of it, and see if they will not hearken to you, and thank you for your Admonition.*

Christians, prove your selves to be conscientious by your tendernesse; however the world go about; to blant and

and reproach you with your consciences, and call your uprightnesse hypocrisie, your tendernesse obstinacy, yet part not with it so, but still resolve with *Job, chap. 27. T il I dye, I will not remove mine integrity from me.* There is a double way wherein we may be said to remove our integrity : 1. By departing from it. 2. By belying it.

1. By departing from our integrity, by turning aside to iniquity, by being found false to God and conscience, and by a libertie in sinning, exchanging this truth and tendernesse of heart for hardnessse and hypocrisie. Take heed you do not thus depart from your integrity. Beloved, you live in a world wherein conscience is like to cost you dear : if you will own any such thing as conscience, or conscientious walking, you are like to smart for it : Look to it, that your conscience be found such as is worth the suffering for ; do not suffer for the name of conscience, or conscientious, but for the thing : Look to it, that whatsoever you suffer for conscience, you suffer nothing from conscience, for your wronging, or abusing, or violating of it. Sufferings for conscience, for an upright conscience, are precious : Sufferings from conscience, from an evil and abused conscience, will be bitter. Let all the world be against you, rather than conscience ; whom the world smites for conscience, God will heal ; whom the world judges, God will justify ; but if our hearts condemn us, who shall plead for us, or comfort us ? Carry your selves so, that conscience may be your comforter, not your tormentor : There is no torment like the stings and revenges of an abused conscience : Keep your consciences tender, and they will neither hurt you, nor suffer you to be hurt by others ; keep your integrity, and it will keep you. The Psalmist prayes, *Psal. 25. 21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me* : Let me not think to shift my self of trouble, by sheltering my self under sin : Let me not go about to make my peace with my troublous Adversaries, by casting

ing in my lot with them ; let me never think to be behol-
den to iniquity for my safety ; let integrity preserve me :
Preserve thou me in mine integrity, and let it preserve
me. Christians, give the world leave to talk and do what
they will, but when they have said and done their worst,
keep you honest, and you shall keep you safe ; Your Con-
sciences will be your confidence, and your security ; *He*
that walketh uprightly shall walk sure. Be not reproach-
ed out of your refuge, let not the world find you obsti-
nate against your duty, nor yet yielding to iniquity ; be
not stubborn, but yet be stedfast, yield to reproofs, while
you slight reproaches.

Let us be so gentle, flexible, easie to be entreated, so
fearful to offend, so ready to please all men, in all things
which are not against Conscience, its peace and purity,
that we may convince them, that in those things wherein
we fix and do not yield, it is because we *cannot*, not be-
cause we *will not* ; and let us yet be so stedfast in those
things which would be a wound and defilement to con-
science, that we may let them see, it is but a vain attempt
for them to think to reproach or persecute us out of our
integrity ; let us be sincerely tender, not out of any sick-
liness or weakness of conscience, or from groundless
scrupulosity, much less from sullenness of *humour*, but
from a *sound* mind and pure *conscience*.

Let us be universally tender of every evil, not only of
the greatest and most scandalous, but of the smallest sins,
not only of open sins, such as come to the view of men,
but of the most secret sins, the most inward and spiritual
wickednesse, such as need fear no reproof but consci-
ence ; let us be tender, not only of committing sin, but
of any omissions or neglects ; not only of our neglects
of duties, but our negligencies in duties, and that dead-
ness, formality, cursorines, coldnes, hypocrisy, di-
stractions, which hence arise ; of the neglects, or neg-
ligent

ligent performances of our duty to God, of our duty to then, to our Families, to our friends, to our enemies, our not pitying them, nor praying for them, not wishing them well, not doing them good for their evil, and endeavouring by our soft, meek, inoffensive and loving carriage towards them, to win and gain upon their hearts. Oh Brethren, we have much to blame our selves for, though evil men have little, or if they have more, they are so unhappy as not to hit upon the right, judging us and condemning us, not for our faults, but for the good that is found in us. But however, we have much to blame our selves for; the Lord help us, we have many haltings, and many failings. Oh it were well for us if our hearts had no more to say against us, than men can say; what unevennesse and inequality is there in our goings? what intermissions of our care and watchfulness? whatever our aims and desires are, what an universal regard soever we have to the will of God, yet when we come to practice, in how many things do we go awry? It may be we dare not wholly neglect a dutie, not a praying season, not a hearing season, but our hearts will presently be upon us and smite us for it, but are we not often remisse and negligent in our duties, and go out with it without any trouble? may be we take some care in the matters of our *own* souls, but what do we for our families, our friends and acquaintance? may be we dare not conform to evil men, nor have fellowship with them in their evil waies, but do we not *connive* at them? may be we do not *render evil for evil, railing for railing*, but do we good for evil, do we pitie them, pray for them, and labour by all lawful means to gain upon their hearts? may be we dare not be unrighteous, or unjust in our dealings, but are we not unmerciful, unpeaceable, unquiet? we dare not lie, nor swear, or curse, but are we so watchful as we should be against idle and vain talkings, frothy and unsavoury

unsavoury discourses? may be we cannot suffer any rooted malice to abide in our hearts, but are there not many sudden and furious fits of passion and anger breaking forth, much bitter and provoking language? are we not fretful and impatient, without ever laying it much to heart? Doth conscience check us for, and make resistance against every evil? Let us be universally tender, universally careful. Oh that our consciences were but as tender as our lusts, our pride will not bear any thing that reflects upon our Reputation, our covetousnesse will not bear any thing that is an *hindrance* to our *gains*, our passions will hardly bear the least crosse or unpleasing word, how touchy are we at every little thing that does offend us? Oh if conscience were in every thing as tender as Lust, what Christians should we be! but woe to us, whatever we should be, how short do we fall? how unequal are our goings? how unsteady are our tempers? sometimes tender, sometimes hard, sometimes watchful, sometimes heedlesse; in some things careful, in some things careless; how do we too much justifie the wicked, and harden them in their Reproaches of us? Let us *prese* on with so much earnestnesse to this evennesse and exactnesse in all our wayes, that it may be seen, that however we have not yet attained, yet we are following after; though we have not reached to, yet we are reaching towards it; though through infirmity we fall into many iniquities, yet we allow not to our selves a liberty in any; such a conscience as this, such a course as this, will plead for its self against all the calumnies of the world.

2. By belying your integrity; that is the sense in which *Job* speaks in the forementioned Scripture, *I will not remove mine integrity*; that is, I will never bely my integrity: Call you me an Hypocrite, or what else you please, God forbid that I should justifie you by belying my self, and saying as you say. Brethren, do not out of any base

fear, or to make your peace with sinners, do not say of your tendernesse and watchful walking, this was my pride, or my hypocrisy, or my humor, or self-will, but stand upon your own uprightness; *Till I dye, I will hold fast my righteousness, and will not let it go; mine heart shall not reproach me while I live.* ver. 6.

2. They give heed to conscience, they will hearken to, and follow conscience; the voice of a well instructed conscience, is the voice of God, and to this voice they will hearken, without turning aside in anie thing, either to the right hand, or the left. By turning aside to the right hand, I mean the same which Solomon does, by being righteous overmuch, *Eocl. 7. 16. Be not righteous overmuch:* The imposing upon our selves such strictnesse, and those severities which God hath not imposed, the making those things to be sins, which God hath not made to be sins, and thereby making the narrow way narrower than the Lord hath made it: and this may be done,

1. By putting Religion in such things, in which God hath put none, laying other bonds and burthens on our necks, than those which the Holy Ghost hath laid on us: The abridging and cutting our selves short of that Christian Liberty, which the Lord hath not only allowed, but commanded us to maintain and stand fast in.

2. By putting more Religion in any thing than God hath put in it, by laying a greater weight and stresse upon the lesser and smaller things of Religion, than God hath layed on them. By the lesser duties of Religion, I mean not any *moral duties*: the lowest of these, the lowest duties of mercy, justice, charity, truth, &c. are to be reckoned among the *mighty matters of the Law*, wherein we cannot erre by being too strict: we cannot be too just, or too true, or too merciful, nor too zealous for truth, justice and mercy, *Mat. 5. 19. He that breaketh the least of these Commandments, and teacheth men so, shall be cal-*

led the least in the Kingdom of Heaven : but by the lesser things of Religion, I mean the circumstantials of the worship of God, the outward forms of worship, the gestures, &c. to be used in it. This is a being righteous overmuch, to put more in these circumstantials, than the Scripture hath put, to be so zealous for or against them, as if Religion stood or fell with them. *1 Cor. 7. 19. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the Commandments of God.* Some there were that did hotly contend for *Circumcision*, and did put much of their Religion in that ; others were as hot against it, and this was much of their Religion ; both these the Apostle checks, telling them that *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing* ; these are not the things wherein Religion stands ; keep the Commandments, fear God, walk before God in holiness and righteousness, let your zeal be spent that way, but trouble not your selves so much about these lesser matters. Two things must here be added.

1. This is not so to be understood, as if Christians were to swallow all things of this nature, without examining whether they be agreeable to the Word of God or not ; a due regard must be had to the satisfying of conscience, even in the smallest things ; we may not yield to practise any little things which are against our consciences, though we may not spend our zeal about them, as if Religion lived or dyed with them.

2. Even against these lesser things there ought to be zeal express, if they should be like to prove destructive to the substantials of Religion, and hinder the main end which they pretend to promote ; by this it appears what I mean by turning aside to the right hand, or being righteous overmuch.

By turning aside to the left hand, I mean the same which Solomon there doth, by being wicked overmuch, *Neither be thou wicked overmuch.* This is not to be understood, as if

there were anie wickednesse which is not too much, a lit-
tle is too much ; it checks and restrains all Libertie to sin ;
though in manie things we sin all, yet let not sin get the
head of thee, keep it under, keep it down as much as pos-
sible, lest it grow to that height, that it prove thy speedy
ruine ; by turning aside therefore to the left hand , un-
derstand all declinings to Licentiousnesse ; either,

1. By making duties no duties, making sins to be no
sins , and so making the way of life broader than Christ
hath made it ; and stretching our Liberty beyond our
Line ; as turning aside to the right hand, stands in the
infringing of our Liberty,in imposing such burdens which
God hath not imposed, so turning to the left hand, stands
in taking up a liberty which God hath not allowed, throw-
ing off those burdens which God hath imposed, making
it no matter of conscience to be strict, not onlie in the cir-
cumstantialis, but neither in the substantials of Religion ;
so blinding conscience, and bribing it over to fide with
Lust, that it accounts not a dutie, to be so strict and so
precise in anie thing, but that there may be a great Lat-
titude allowed, and a remitting of our care and zeal, espe-
cially in cases of any hazard or danger that our zealand
strictnesse is like to cost us.

2. Making bold with duties and sins, neglecting known
duties, running upon known sins, making shipwrack of
conscience to satisfie Lust; when though conscience stands
convinced, that holiness, in the strictnesse of it, is our
duty ; and that Licentiousnesse, and living after the flesh,
is our sin; yet we will indulge to our selves fleshly liberty.

Now this is another character of circumspect Christians, they will walk according to conscience in all things, without turning aside either way, either to the right hand, or the left ; they are not willing to turn aside to the right hand, either by putting Religion in those things in which God hath put none, or by putting more of Re-
ligion

ligion in anie thing, than God hath put in it; their zeal is for the substantialls and weightie things of Religion; as for the circumstantialls, though they will not act in these contrarie to conscience, yet they list not to be contentious about them, nor censorious of those, who agreeing in the main, do differ in these things from them.

But their great care is not to turn aside to the left hand; they will not for fear of being too precise, grow profuse and profane; but as the Apostle, *Hebr. 13.18.* *They have a good Conscience, willing to live honestly in all things, endeavouring to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present evil world, being holy and harmless, the Children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked generation.*

III. From this way they will not be withdrawn, either by anie hopes or advantages on the one hand, or, by any fears or dangers on the other; they have not taken up Religion on such slight grounds, as to be either flattered or frightened out of it. Christians, at their first engaging in the way of the Lord, do sit down and consider what it will cost them to be Christ's Disciples, they count all the charges, they cast up all the damages that they can be subject to before-hand, and foresee that there is enough in Christ to make amends for all, and to save them harmless at the last, whatever falls. They count upon Tribulations, Losses, Reproaches, and the greatest of Temptations; and if they did not foresee, that the gain of godlinesse would countervail all the losses and inconveniences its like to be attended with, they would not have adventured on it; but seeing for a certaintie they can be no losers, hereupon they set up their stasse, determining not to depart for ever. They take Christ and his wayes for better, for worse, for richer, for poor, in prosperitie and affliction; they resolve to stand or fall, to suffer and reign, to live and dye with him: They promise to him, as *Ruth to Naomi,*

Ruth 1. 14. *As the Lord liveth, I will not leave thee; whither thou goest I will go, where thou lodgest I will lodge: They will take their Lot with Christ where-ever it falls: Christ hath said to them, I will never forsake you,* Heb. 13. 5. and they have said the like to him; he that hath not thus engaged, is no true Christian; this absolute resolution to be ever the Lord's, never to forsake him, is of the essence of true conversion; he is no true convert, that is content to follow Christ in fair weather only, as far and as long as he safely may; a sincere Convert will follow Christ absolutely and unalterably. Now being thus engaged, what-ever befalls them, it is no more than they looked for; they are called fools, and counted stubborn, and refractory, self-will'd, self-conceited, and they look'd to be counted such, and so it moves them not: they are set upon by flatteries, and tempted by outward prosperity, but it cannot prevail; *Thy money perish with thee*, says Peter. *Germana illa bestia non curat pecuniam*: 'Twas said of Luther. Money will do nothing with them, Preferment will do nothing with them, Prisons, Banishment, Death it self can do nothing with them; *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy,* Acts 20. 24.

And as they will not be drawn to a total Apostasie from Christ, so neither will they be brought to allow themselves in any little deviation, Psal. 44. 17, 18. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant, our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined thy way:* In what case they were, you may see in the foregoing part of the Psalm; *Thou hast cast us off, thou makest us to turn our backs upon our enemies, and they that hate us, spoyle for themselves; thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us, &c.*

Though

Though all this be come upon us, yet have we not, &c. Our heart is not turned back: We do not repent of our chaise; we do not wish our selves back amongst the prosperous world; we think never the worse of the Lord, or his way; we have as good a will to the Lord, high an esteem of his ways, as ever we had before we were thus afflicted; there's not the least abatement of our love and affection: If we were now to begin again, if we were now to choose whom we would serve, and know as much as we do now, we should make the same choice; our heart runs out the same way, and in the same strength that ever it did; those many waters that have run upon us, have neither quenched, no not so much as cool'd our love; neither have our steps declined from thy way: We have neither been turned back in our affection, nor turned aside in our practice; through the grace of God our hearts have been kept upright, and we have made straight steps to our feet, Dan. 6. 10. we read, that when a Decree was made, *That whosoever should ask any Petition for thirty days space, either of God or man, save of the King, should be cast into the Lions Den;* Yet Daniel would not forbear to pray to his God; when he knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his Chamber, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and Prayed, &c. Carnal men would have been ready to have said, What a precise Fool was this Daniel? What great matter was it that he stood so much upon? it was not the committing a sin that he was urged to, but only the forbearance of a Duty; he was not required to fall down before an Image, as the three Children were, or to worship any false God; but to forbear, for a time, to pray to the true God. If it had been the worshipping before an Image that had been required, some would have reasoned thus; Why, what great matter had that been, to bow in the house of Rimon, to bow before an

Image, or in Altar ; this is not praying to them ? There is a great difference betwixt worshipping an Image, and worshipping God before an Image ; what is there in all this ? But this, which *Daniel* stands upon, hath not so foul a face ; 'twas only the forbearance of his duty to God, and that only for a time : Was this such a crime, to forbear praying for a few weeks, for the saving of his life ? Or, if he would needs pray, he might have done it secretly, and kept his devotion to himself ; Must he needs keep his hours, and open his windows too ? Yea, he must do it, and he will do it : *Daniel* would not only continue his course of Prayer, but he would not give his Adversaries occasion to think, that he was afraid to pray ; he held it his duty (being called out to a confession of his Religion) to let his Adversaries know, that he had not such a slight and low esteem of it, that he was afraid to trust his God with his safety, whilst he continued in the exercise of his duty. It's true, that in matters circumstantial, such, wherein there may be variation without prejudice to the substantials of Godliness, such which are not against their consciences, which they may submit to without sinning against God ; here they are not stiff, nor refractory, but for peace sake, and in order to the quieting upon the hearts of others, they are willing, with the Apostle, 1 Cor. 9. 20. *To become all things to all men* ; in such things wherein they can satisfie themselves, they are willing, as far as may be, to gratifie the minds of others.

But for the Substantials of Religion, the matters of Faith, the matters of Righteousnesse and Holiness, the worshipping of God in Spirit and truth, according to his own Ordinances and institutions, or any thing else of the same import with these ; here they are resolved, whatever come upon them, or become of them, not to renounce, or be drawn aside from them, by any solicitations, whatsoever ; they must obey God, rather than men ;

men; they must follow God, though therein they forsake and provoke all the world. In matters which God hath left to their liberty, they are willing to use their libertie, according as it may be behooveful for the Gospel. In matters that concern their personal interest, as men, they list not, they ought not to be contentions, spare them but the liberty to keep a good conscience, give them leave to fear God, and worship God, give them leave to be holie and righteous, and to walk before the Lord in their integrarie; and for anie thing else, you may perswade them to it with ease: But, if you entice them awaie from their God, or impose upon them, to the prejudice of a good conscience, you were as good spare your labour, speak no more to them in such matters, they are at a point, God they will follow, a good Conscience they will maintain, whatever come on them, to the end of their daies.

Thus I have given you a description of the Scripture-Precisians, which is summarily this; They are the same with sincere Godlie men, men fearing God, who are inwardlie renewed after the Image of God; who are adventurers for another world, are gotten into the waie of life, and are walking on carefullie and heedfullie in that waie, whose aim and endeavour is to live, not according to the wills and lusts of men, but according to the Word and Will of God, not according to humour and fancies, but according to conscience; a people that will neither make the way to Heaven narrower than it is, by being scrupulous and nice, where God hath given them libertie; nor will make it broader than it is, by taking up looser principles, or allowing themselves in loose practices. A people that dare not adventure their souls upon that easie, formal, careless, outward way of Religion, that the most do; but are willing to make sure work, by walking to the exactness of their Rule, and living up to the

the height of their principles; and who in this holie course are stedfast and immoveable, will neither be bribed off by the flatteries, nor beaten off by the frowns of the world, but will retain their integritie, hold fast their holy Profession, and hold on in their holie course, and this to the death.

Concerning these men, I shall now prove, and make evident to the Consciences of all impartial Persons, in the second place, That they are no Fools, but truly wise men.

In order hereto, I must first discover what's meant by Fools. A fool is a man void of understanding (we are not now discoursing of natural Fools, but of those that are such upon a moral account) a man void of true wisdom. Wisdom is of two sorts:

i. **Fleshly Wisdom**, a Carnal policie; which consists in an understanding where the interest of the flesh lies, and in the ordering and managing of our selves and our affairs so, that we may advance and secure this interest. By the interest of the flesh, I mean, all those things which please and gratifie the flesh, and wherewith the fleshlie minds of men are most delighted, and place their content and happiness in, as outward peace and quiet, outward ease and security, outward plenty and prosperitie, outward credit and reputation; he that can order his affairs, and steer his course so, as will most advance and best secure these his outward concernments, that which way soever the world go, he may live in peace, and quiet, and credit, and plenty, and pleasure, this is a fleshly wise man. Concerning this wisdom, the question is not; in this it will easily be granted, *That the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light;* can make a better shift to live in the world, to keep themselves whole in all changes and casualties; the Apostle disclaims this wisdom, 1 Cor. 1. 12. we had our conversion in the world, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the

the Grace of God, and in simplicity and godly sincerity.

2. Spiritual wisdom, which consists, 1. In the understanding where our main interest lies, which is not in things temporal, meat, and drink, and cloaths, and mony, and houses, and lands, and pleasure, and honours; but in things Spiritual, in the love and favour of God, in a good Conscience, in Righteousnes, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost; and in things eternal, in that Glory, Honour, and Immortality which shall be given of God. 2. In ordering our selves and ways so, as to make the best provifion for securing of this our great and eternal interest, that whatever miscarriages there may be in things of lower value and least duranc, that wherein our eternal happiness stands, may be secured to us; this is called in Scripture, *The wisdom which is from above*, wisdom to Salvation; and this is the only true Wisdom. God hath made and will make all fleshly wisdom to appear to be folly. Concerning this true Wisdom, this Spiritual Wisdom, it is, that I shall now make good, That circumspect precise Christians are no fools, but the only wise men; and that from these Reasons.

1. God accounts them no fools.

2. They will not be accounted fools at last, neither by God nor men.

3. The properties of wise men are found in them.

4. The Treasures of Wisdom are found with them.

Reas. 1. God counts them no fools, they are no fools upon a true account, whom the world counts fools, but they only are such whom God counts fools, as the Apostle, 2 Cor. 10. *Not he that commends himself is approved, but he whom the Lord commends;* so, not he that condemneth himself, or is condemned of men for folly or simplicity, is disapproved, but whom God condemneth. Beloved, whose judgment will you take? will you stand to the judgment of God in this case? His judge-

ment